



A Cultural Study in the Poetics of Ecological Consciousness:  
Prolegomena to the Poetry of John Burnside

Mr. Tom Bristow

A thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
to The School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures,  
The University of Edinburgh, 2007.

I, Tom Bristow, was admitted as a research student and doctoral candidate in English Literature at the University of Edinburgh in the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, in January, 2004. I hereby certify that this thesis has been composed by me, it is the record of the research carried out by me and no other(s), and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed

Date

## Thesis Abstract

This thesis -- originally entitled "Reckoning the Unnamed Fabric", both a cultural study of the poetics of ecological consciousness and the ecology of poetic consciousness -- investigates the post-Romantic legacy informing John Burnside's (b. 1955) poetry from The hoop (1988) to The Light Trap (2002) as a case study. The thesis argues that a developing aesthetic form and movement in subject derive from Burnside's increasing involvement with ecological thought and practice. This move to the poetry of the oikos begins with an investigation of the self through the reconciliation of subject with object (or human with nature), and latterly has moved into a sustained reflection upon the idea of dwelling. This thesis relates the chronological development across Burnside's nature poetry to an aesthetic infused with religious iconography and language, which via an evolving motif-poem of 'world-soul' or 'communal fabric' increases in its secular and empirical inflection. I read Burnside's elevation of historical materialism as a progression in Wordsworthian craft and as a result of the poet's pragmatic reflection on dwelling; I argue that the poetic consolidation of the intrinsic value of nature as an active and guiding spirit promotes nature less as a place for inhabitants than as the site and point of relation.

The argument responds to Burnside's transatlantic perspective from which he questions what it means to live as a spirit, and what a poetics of ecology can achieve in respect to the human subjective lyric and the need to transcend the human into the collective. To address these questions, which are implicit in Burnside's oeuvre, I draw upon Heideggerian poetics and American post-Transcendentalist Romanticism. I locate Burnside's poetics within philosophical, aesthetic, and ecological frameworks. First, Burnside's poetry is primarily a poetics of ontology that understands the 'I' within the midst of things yet underpinned by epistemology/hermeneutics; second, Burnside exhibits neo-Romantic poetry that has engaged with Modern American poetry -- it is this fusion that I call post-Romantic; third, the ecological constitutes both Burnside's political stance and his aesthetic-poetic stance. I read the latter as a reflection of Jonathan Bate's notion of the ecopoem as the "post-phenomenological inflection of high Romantic poetics", an idea which is most apposite when read in relationship with Burnside's path towards the metaphysical inscribed in the historical.

### Acknowledgements

Fellow post-graduate researchers at the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, all faculty at the Department of English Literature, presenters at the English Literature Graduate Visiting Speaker Seminar Series 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07 and delegates at the British Academy Embodied Values Workshops, the Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH), 2007-08, at the University of Edinburgh, are due my respect and gratitude. Further thanks should be extended to presenters and attendees at the University of Warwick Centre for Research in Philosophy and Literature, "Poetry and Belief" Workshop, February, 2005; the University of Leicester Urban History Group Annual Conference, "Landscape, Environment and Human Agency in the City since 1700", April, 2005; the second "Interactive Mind" Workshop, Edinburgh, June, 2005; the sixth biennial conference of the Association of the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE-US), the University of Oregon, June 2005; the Austrian Association of University Teachers of English (AAUT) "About Raymond Williams: A Conference", the University of Vienna, May, 2006; "Romanticism, Environment, Crisis", the University of Wales, June, 2006; and the fourth biennial conference of the Association of the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE-UK), "Discordant Harmonies: Ecocriticism in the Twenty-First Century", University of Lincoln, September, 2006. Also thanks to the speakers at the eighth conference of the Scottish Association for the Study of America (SASA), University of Edinburgh, 2 March 2007; the fifth annual University of Dundee English Postgraduate Conference, "InVisibilities: Absence and Presence in Cultural Texts and Images", June 2007; the University of York Department of English and Related Literature conference, "Real Things: Matter, Materiality, Representation: 1880 to the Present", July 2007; the first biennial ASLE-UK graduate conference, "Modern Environments: Contemporary Readings in Green Studies", September 2007, the University of Glasgow; and speakers at "Poetic Ecologies: Nature as Text and Text as Nature in English Language Verse", Université Libre de Bruxelles, May 2008. Warm regards for the support received are respectfully extended to the Royal Irish Academy, faculty at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Dundee and all staff and fellows at IASH, the University of Edinburgh. Final thanks to The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), who sponsored this research between 2004 and 2007.

## Contents

Abbreviations	iv
Exordium: Context and Methodology	1
1. Framework: Post-Romantic Ecopoetics	54
2. Formations: Early Burnside	105
3. Developments: Towards an Ecopoetic	159
4. Dwelling: The Asylum Dance	212
5. Ecology: The Light Trap	268
Afterword: Terminus and New Directions	328
Works Cited	336

## Abbreviations

In addition to the Modern Language Association (MLA) documentation style conventions, I deploy the following abbreviations:

<u>Th</u>	The hoop, 1988
<u>CK</u>	Common Knowledge, 1991
<u>FD</u>	Feast Days, 1992
<u>MOT</u>	The Myth of the Twin, 1994
<u>SIF</u>	Swimming in the Flood, 1997
<u>ANS</u>	A Normal Skin, 1998
<u>TAD</u>	The Asylum Dance, 2000
<u>TLT</u>	The Light Trap, 2002
<u>TGN</u>	The Good Neighbour, 2005
<u>AL</u>	A Lie About My Father, 2006
<u>GS</u>	Gift Songs, 2007

Full publication details are to be accessed in the bibliography. I reserve the formulations 'ch.', 'p.', 'pp.', 'pt.' and 'sec.' for referencing internal to this thesis.

Every great poet creates his poetry out of one single poetic statement only. The measure of his greatness is the extent to which he becomes so committed to that singleness that he is able to keep his poetic Saying wholly within it.

The poet's statement remains unspoken. None of his individual poems, nor their totality, says it all. Nonetheless, every poem speaks from the whole of the one single statement, and in each instance says that statement. From the site of the statement there rises a wave that in each instance moves his Saying as poetic saying. But that wave, far from leaving the site behind, in its rise causes all the movement of Saying to flow back to its ever more hidden source. The site of the poetic statement, source of the movement-giving wave, holds within it the hidden nature of what, from a metaphysical-aesthetic point of view, may at first appear to be rhythm.

Martin Heidegger, "Language in the Poem", 1953.

## Exordium

I. Initial Outline

This thesis forwards an overarching framework to access the poetic output by John Burnside (b. 1955) from 1988 to 2002 as a progression toward the metaphysical and the ecological as a single move. As a study into the contemporary poetics of ecological consciousness Burnside's anti-dualist position to reconcile mind and matter, and being and world is read as an attempt to reconcile the material and the spiritual. This disposition is illuminated by his belief in a contingent self and a non-contingent soul ("Iona: A Quest for the Pagan" 22)<sup>1</sup> -- the evident gap bridged by an ecology of mind. It is imperative that the reader keeps this duality within the context of its extension: this mind achieves a gathering of the self as a form of (dis)possession, where "[you] suddenly [see] yourself from outside" (25) -- an historical perspective and modality that offers consciousness as the site of interrelations and not the ordering of relations. This is a prerequisite to understanding the interdependent exchange between mental ecology and physical ecology, and it underpins the politics of representation (both of 'I' and of other) within the poetic site Burnside constructs.

I read the poetry without recourse to Burnside's short stories or novels for they do not share the same conceptual premise of inquiry into the limits of the lyrical. Burnside stipulates that his oeuvre is concerned with "healing" (Dosa interview 22), and that his prose works operate within the process of discovery and journey toward this, while his poems are works of attention (as a means); these are, he conceives, "different branching paths off that [one] road" (21). Burnside's first novel, The Dumb House (1997) replays the experiment

---

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as "Iona".



of the Egyptian king, Psammetichus I to discover the first spoken language. Burnside's prose develops from here to explore human-to-human relationships within specific landscapes and under certain historic conditions; the poetry remains interested in the idea of ursprache but evolves into an interest in written language. In chapter two I review Burnside's interest in the formation of circuits of the brain in my exposition of the poems "Chain Work" and "Source Code" (CK) and their associative lexis in information technology, reflecting upon the capacity to forge new links and reorganize self/object to adapt to new environments/learn new skills ('willed' dwelling). Each language places its own stamp upon the brain creating highly distinct neuronal connections, self-sufficient brain networks (Wolf). This encourages Burnside to forward the experience of the lyrical 'I' replicated in the reading process; a process that highlights the disposition beyond information processing and discovering solutions: it is thought-in-action. I read Burnside's phenomenological aspect with this in mind. It is generative energy that carries the sense that truth is created by the self but also that the poetics of self-to-world (both nature and text, exaggerated by the associative dimension of the intertext in Burnside's oeuvre) creates inferentially, analytically, and critically cogent subjects receptive to *world-to-self dynamics*. This undermines anthropocentric comportment.

What is primarily of interest to a reader of the poetry is that it is a scientific premise that informs the spiritual. For Heidegger scientific principles banished the traditional value of things and enabled a view upon material and world that reduced them to mere resource abstracting them from the context of life and work, the free play of letting be. Burnside follows Heidegger but injects ecological principles back into the mix. The resulting aims of this project are to posit reader and text into a creative semiosphere i.e.

to participate as agents in the larger play of the poems across collections and the oeuvre and to collocate poems within the textual referencing offered by the poet, finding each poem as a nexus of meaning simultaneously critiquing and foregrounding a phenomenological pulse that centres the 'I' and the reader. This raises distinct problems, especially in TLT:

Who is that reader who knows a lot about Lucretius, but who also knows a lot about the notion of 'home' in Heidegger, and who reads a lot of Wallace Stevens, and who reads Walter Benjamin and Heraclitus in the original German and Greek respectively, but who also reads Latin passably and is also well-versed in the botany of the British Isles? Burnside's ideal reader would have to be better read than Coleridge. (Richardson 143)

I do not disagree completely, but I do see the use-value in following up references and creatively making connections across the Frankfurt School and earlier German thought out into a post-Puritan sensibility. Measuring the advantages and disadvantages posed to the general reader by this approach is not an emphasis of my qualitative analysis but I do address intertextuality throughout the thesis in terms of aleatory poetics offering illumination upon sources, and specifically in terms of peritext in chapter five within a thesis on the poetics of structure. However, to return to my position above, the interest value for the reader of Burnside's poetry listening in on Burnside's science is sustained in that Burnside's disposition is one fully aware of the level of materiality in late twentieth century culture that can no longer retreat to the pastoral or indicate the pre-linguistic. This does not marry or sit neatly within a paradox beside the *letting be* of things, nor do the two terms offer a simple contradiction, but they are terms resident within every collection under analysis in this thesis. As a means to indicate the possible bridging of the pre-linguistic and the voicing of world, or to see them in relation, Burnside's canon is posited as an ecological and

phenomenological reconciliation of nature poetry within British Romanticism and American post-Transcendentalist post-Romanticism. By this, I indicate that a post-religious view of the sacred is offered to a reading of the traditionally conceived sublime, ephemeral, transcendental and other-worldly, brokered by terms of ecology, self co-extensive with world, and a view of the imagination drawn from the influences of New England and its hinterland, and the wider arc of twentieth and twenty-first century Americana. These offer relation, I argue, not non-relation.

To propose Burnside's oeuvre as a suitable candidate for ecocriticism to enlarge upon, this thesis extends Jonathan Bate's ecological tradition outlined in Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition (1991) and The Song of the Earth (2000) by positing traditional criticism alongside phenomenological analysis across poems to view their incorporation into an emergent oeuvre embodied by post-Romantic 'metaphysical-ecological' poetry. I arrive at this position after reviewing the literary and environmental stress in Catherine Rigby's response to Bate. Moreover, my understanding of their debate and my reading of post-Romanticism suggests that the compound is an attempt to understand home in a material and spiritual sense always locatable by an 'I' in the life-world to emphasize that one is never exempted from the field of inquiry, one is embodied within it. This consideration of the degree that sense impressions and intentional consciousness constitute world promotes the lyrical device drawn from an ecologically sensitive model of encounter, which could be termed 'enworldment'.

This project to understand home within a scientific and rational account of nature is gaining kudos inside and outside the humanities in this new century, however the larger issues this brings into relief -- how we critically examine home and how human epistemologies

offer narrow conceptions of home in terms of exile, nation, or belonging -- are those that Burnside's poetry has encouraged this critical examination to address. I am concerned with Burnside's progression from the Romantic problem of 'I' and mind/other not the politics of self and nation state, nor self determination. Furthermore, it is very interesting that as a centre of perception Burnside's lyrics attempt to posit creativity within historical materialism. This subjective control is bound further by the empirical grounding often expressed by Burnside's attentiveness to qualia: "the specific textures of our experience of the world" (Bate "Eco laurels"), in itself promoting legitimacy to exploring the universe through human consciousness while also supporting a view of experience as a tool for direct awareness of the universe.<sup>2</sup> This qualifies the paradox between transcendent/metaphysical thinking and historical materialism and negates the view on the British poetic which does not offer lyrical enlightenment of the circumstantial and the profoundly mysterious in the manner that Burnside's enchantment forwards.

To see how these concerns are deposited in the early poetry is to afford a view of an accumulative lyric that evolves into a vessel of diluted egotism in TLT; here it reaches Martin Heidegger's meaning of Being as relational in terms of pure forces that hold the world together: the intentional stance of the phenomenological overridden by extensionality. Here the fabric of world, biosphere/ecosphere, takes on greater significance as it increases in its material inflection and is reflected in the poetic device (the poem) itself. This approach to reading Burnside's lyrics begins to uncover a device synthesizing two terms of a dialectic, foregrounding and

---

<sup>2</sup> A unique engagement for Bate; the poet featured neither in Song nor in "'The Green Line' of Contemporary Poetry'," The Line of Contemporary Poetry, The British and Irish Contemporary Poetry Conference, St Anne's College, Oxford University, 22 Sept. 2006.

contextualizing phenomenological reconciliations of the immanent and transcendental. Why the need to marry these terms is still a preoccupation in the twenty-first century remains a point of interest to readers in so far as the displacement of God -- however far from memory -- is rekindled within the metaphysical aspect of nature (or the world's *worlding* and human Being i.e. how things are) as strong elements within Burnside's secular, redemptive ethos. Readers sensitive to the failed projects of modernity or the rise of insecurity, global capital, and depleting resources, may find this of value without the need to regain a religious disposition. While Stephen Priest argues that existentialism is still available for the purpose to restore metaphysics (224-238) Burnside's main argument is not one of faith or salvation but one of *reconnection*, which he views through relationships (dynamically between and across people, place, and history), healing, and the lack of selfhood.

The coalescence of immanent and (traditionally conceived) transcendence in Burnside's oeuvre is mapped by the thesis viewing the metaphysical-transcendental compound from the positions of philosophy, aesthetics, and ecology within a schema that has an internal logic shaped by Burnside's pronouncements. The feature of the compound -- that it will not precipitate -- is a feature of Burnside's approach to the perception of nature, which manifests in the form of his collections. Burnside's criticism and pronouncements as a poetic and cultural commentator are examined alongside the texture of his poems to show that the interplay between these forms is his contribution to philosophical and cultural activity in late twentieth-century and early twenty-first century Britain.

#### I.A. Prolegomena and Central Claims

At the time of writing, Burnside has released ten volumes of poetry

beginning with Th and most recently GS. 2006 marked a significant period in Burnside's career. He released his first autobiographical work (AL) and published Selected Poems, signposting a termination point to a first period of subjective meditation upon the human condition. Burnside has moved from the dwelling trilogy into a book on responses to art and spiritual thought, GS, while publishing his sixth prose work, The Devil's Footprints (2007), and his twentieth book in as many years, the apocalyptic novel, Glister (2008). His poetry continues to be published in literary newspapers and magazines and shows that he has extended the metaphysics of TLT. The extension suggests that TGN represents a retrenchment or strategic retreat, pulling back to go further forwards. The economizing of metaphysical contemplation in TGN occurs at the point in a process analogous to a stream finding its path: the way the water reaches an obstacle, backs up, accumulates a lake, and ultimately starts flowing again: the mind envisions an arrow's line with a knot-like circle. This reformulated energy is still under composition and cannot be analysed in full, yet the latest collection (GS) indicates it is Burnside's post-dwelling priority.

It does not come as a surprise to the author that Burnside has very recently revisited his mentor, Stevens, in the Faber series, 'Poet to Poet' (Stevens Selected).<sup>3</sup> Stevens is a towering influence upon Burnside, a poet "responding... to the demands made by twentieth-century philosophy and science for a new way of thinking" (Burnside in Stevens Selected xi). Stevens' invitation to consider questions "with a long philosophical pedigree" (Eckhart 109) and to express their insight poetically (Critchley 4) are touchstones for Burnside's exploration of Romantic ventriloquy and improvisation, constellating in an aesthetic that pushes "poetry and its maker out

---

<sup>3</sup> Published in May 2008, subsequent to the candidate's defence of this thesis. See also Burnside, "The Wonder of Daylight."

of a servile, derivative position in society" (Robinson, J. 97), effectively positing his own work within a line of poetics that works in the complex field between making and knowing. This is a site "which effectively illustrates some of the difficulties critics have faced" in articulating a critical paraphrase of an abstraction or 'neutralising' of poetic forces within texts (Jackson). It is a very difficult site where "nature, history, and ontology" are no longer foreign to each other for they operate within a fiction where "nature and spirit *find themselves* rather than being estranged *in* each other" (Rajan 311, emphasis added), something that I propose the Burnside critic should endeavour to enter into relation with. My analysis suggests that TLT is a significant collection under the influence of Stevens, both as the volume in which Burnside realizes the ecological imperative within the philosophy of dwelling (at the mid-point of a trilogy on this theme), and because one may read the poetry within this volume as quintessential 'late' Burnside prefiguring things to come. These are my claims and each chapter follows this macro perspective while offering important elements to each stage of this progression.

The early poetry from Th to MOT begins with the individual navigating the spiritual and physical environment, which in its conclusion registers an idea of self that is viewed simultaneously internally and externally, reflecting upon subjectivity and objectivity. I attend to ecological resonances with this in mind. Chapter one considers the theoretical framework within which to read a contemporary neo-Romantic poet while evoking how this particular mapping of the individual is exemplified by the writer inscribing himself into the text. This leads to ideas of Burnside's particular rhetoric of presence owning the intention of articulating the possibilities of ecopoetics. Chapter two investigates Burnside's early poetry, the idea of self, the other, and borders between the

two, which completes a particular use of mythical and religious iconography in the fourth collection, MOT. Chapter three reads the poet's transformation from the earlier solipsistic journey (where the majority of characters are an inflection or idea of the self) into a discourse upon healing as an example of Burnside navigating the environment without map, prescribed values, nor consciousness that is determined (or willing) to read meaning in every sign (and endorse the a priori) -- that which the phenomenological stance attends to but often fails. This chapter observes the collection SIF, which contends with differing forms of remediation and repentance -- secular, religious, emotional, intellectual, and physical; the analysis portends Burnside's move towards a poetics of dwelling in ANS, also within consideration here. This later collection brings two important issues to the fore: first, Burnside's return home to Scotland and his reflections on making new relations to an old place; and second, the articulation of this re-settlement as acutely meditative: I state that it is found through a particular engagement with the American poet, Wallace Stevens, and via an exilic consciousness rather than forwarding ideas of origin.

I argue that this engagement pushes Burnside's poetry towards a poetics of the metaphysical and the immanent through extensive contemplation upon what it means to dwell: that is to live and to *think*. ANS ends with substantial thoughts on Burnside's dwelling in Anstruther, Scotland, and prefigures the contemplative mode of settlement that configures TAD developed in chapter four. I read the Scottish context into this volume as an extension of the idea that exile is a precondition to dwelling, and affords a mode of settlement, this is as close as I come to a British, Gaelic, or 'culture of dispossession' framework. As a form of anti-nostalgia and acceptance of the loss of origin, this progression anticipates the correct framework within which to read TLT. It centres the



analysis in chapter five where Burnside's most relevant collection for the project of ecocriticism is read for its vision of the ecological-metaphysical compound. The conclusion to the thesis as a whole is thus a simultaneous conclusion to this final chapter. I conclude the thesis with statements in the afterword.

As a thesis on a living poet whose work is incomplete, and as an attempt to stage a thorough inquiry into Burnside's poetry with limited published criticism, this work can only ever be provisional. Burnside's oeuvre, which he has related to the concept of "an ever elaborating poem" (Burnside and Holloway, "In Conversation"; Burnside "Notes Towards an Ecology of Home") is reminiscent of the idea of a metaphysical "single key" (Heidegger Language 161). This takes its philosophical premise from late Stevens, the idea in "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven" (The Auroras of Autumn, 1950) of the *apartness* between eye and experience. The "endlessly elaborating poem / Displays the theory of poetry" (28: 10-11), which, to Stevens, is a Heideggerian "barrenness that appears [as] an exposing" (30: 7), an understatement or poverty in which things slowly and intricately emerge. It is that which through the power of reworking becomes that which "was something imagined that has been washed away" (30: 12) toying with repetition, memory, firstness and emptiness it finds a sense of remembrance or foreknowledge. In Wordsworth this can be viewed as the "rhetoric of repetition", or poetic ecosystem evoked by the poet "continuously present[ing] overlapping or superimposed relationships and patterns of relationships" (Kroeber Ecological 54). Ultimately it is what "sensitive readers without being mystics or romantics or metaphysicians" according to Stevens:

feel that there probably is available in reality something accessible through a theory of poetry which would make a profound difference in our sense of the world (Stevens cited

Burnside in Selected x).<sup>4</sup>

For Burnside, Stevens' oeuvre is an ecological example of the theory of poetry substituting the theory of god: "the progressive development of human society toward an ideal of harmonious individual development and cooperative interaction" (Carroll "Stevens" 88-89), "because one comes to think of it" on repeated reading, Burnside stresses, as "a single fabric, a lifelong discipline" derived from a "disciplined mind at work over a long and thoughtful lifetime" (xiii). As a representational semiotic system, Burnside's poetry moves forward by circling around itself, revisiting and reworking images, themes, lines, and moments from his work and from specific poets and thinkers. It is thus that I propose that Burnside's neo-Romantic intertextuality and the poetic architectonics of reflection, refraction and recreation as modes of synergy across things, is specifically problematic and perplexing: Graeme Richardson labels this "an extraordinary, extraneous life-support machine for one frail idea, the numinous" (144). It is as if the poetry is predicated upon the lines of interconnection across a diverse range of thinking, and that it is predicated upon the processes of reworking, continuum, and emergence -- hall-marks of ecological thought. The imagination in this paradigm is viewed as a cohesive interdependent, circular process and dialectical tension: a cosmology of human mind and external world that views creation as responsive and generative source. This complexity has not yet been articulated by Burnside's critics, but I aim to situate this under the aspect of accumulation and circling. It is a central emphasis in my thesis.

I read Burnside as a poet reworking poems and structuring collections and the oeuvre to create an ecology of meaning driven by

---

<sup>4</sup> Wallace Stevens, letter to Delmore Schwartz, 26 Apr. 1948, Letters 590.

a poetic barrenness that relinquishes some of the poet's responsibilities and therefore agency. Above all other arguments I declare that Burnside's most central statement, the belief in a contingent self and a non-contingent soul ("Iona" 22), is given the rhythmic "metaphysical-aesthetic point" (Heidegger, "Language in the Poem") in Burnside's praxis within an oeuvre conceived as one long poem (Holloway) and "a single fabric" (Burnside in Stevens Selected xii). I am reading this as a "self-transforming continuity" (Kroeber Ecological 55) that once had imagination as a central concept but now finds the necessity to forward the individuality of each moment/unit/action within an empty space of possibility as a means to show the integrity of the whole. Moreover, the variation of meditations upon "things seen and unseen, created from nothingness" (Stevens "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven" 28: 17 Collected) is a post-Wordsworthian creation/perception problematic in Burnside's inquiry into the 'I', memory and home. This Burnsidean denotative act is cyclical, frustratingly indeterminate, yet synthetically alluring. In his oeuvre of reworked poems lies energy so delicate and interwoven that one poem can shift the focus of the body of work that aided its formulation within the series, and thus reformulations of the oeuvre are endlessly possible. This poetic fabric, what Robert Crawford has called Burnside's "'poetico-eco-philosophical' perception" of what science is (Contemporary Poetry 10), has determined the necessity for a chronological approach, which has been chosen in order to elicit useful academic counters for an initial analysis across the collections while remaining mindful of circularity, repetition and the ineffable stain in the co-extensive fabric of the mind and world. It is no more than architecture to access the poetic canon.

I.B. 'Reckoning the Unnamed Fabric' as Eco-criticism

The implied reader -- a predisposition laid by the thesis itself - is interested by an inquiry into the heart of the paradox of Being forwarded by Burnside's poetry: that of a contingent self and non-contingent soul. I begin my approach to primary texts following Félix Guattari's political insight into the determining factors to the existence and intelligibility of discourse. This speaks of the "components of subjectification" (36) over the subject model, and the common praxis of the subject group (128), in effect offering phenomenology that is rehabilitated to a complementary understanding between mathematical and intuitive mind. It is the anti-essentialist discourse of relations not states. "There is a kind of relationship of uncertainty between apprehension of the object and the apprehension of the subject", Guattari states, "so that, to articulate them both, one is compelled to make a *pseudo-narrative detour* through the annals of myth and ritual or through supposedly scientific accounts" (37, original emphasis). The detour, is composed of "repetitions", "rhythms and refrains" (38), the supports to existence that authorize "a discursive intelligibility" (37). Through third-wave ecocriticism, this paradigm of authority can be seen by the reader to be deconstructed and reconstituted by ecological models, much like Burnside's intertextuality and elaborating poeisis where power is disseminated, devolved, and accountable in its relations outwith the detour.

Ecocriticism has moved on from Kroeber's ethos "to make the humanistic studies more socially responsible" (Ecological 1), where an emphasis on "sensory, emotional, and imaginative aspects in art" over the rationalistic (2) meet the new stresses of materialistic "Neuronal Darwinism" or the definition of each organism through its interactions with its environment (7). Recent positions include the

"explicit critical response" to the unheard dialogue between "text and the environmental surroundings" (Love 16) which translates the question of truth into the question of praxis. Poetics as techne, therefore, is increasingly under scrutiny for its own understanding of its discipline and its relation to the human as "cultural creatures" (9). For Phillips, the doctrine of social construction is now enveloped by scientific and literary versions of realism and the discourse of natural history, which challenge the idea that enculturation is alienation (that nature is socially constructed) and that our knowledge is solely representational (x-xi). Nature may be difficult to realize in this new critical light, but the last thing to be argued as legitimate ground is a naïve realism to fulfil empty and negative statements born from the post-modern. The broader post-Romantic context views the modern separation of the substantive reason (as expressed in pre-Enlightenment metaphysics) into morality, art, and science, as a project that can rearticulate an understanding of world and self without an emphasis on moral progress or the control of natural forces. These domains were arranged by the Enlightenment into aspects of validity, i.e. truth, justice, and authenticity. Romanticism deprogrammed this arrangement to lay the grounds for Modernist inquiries into the structures of each of these realms of culture. The eco-critical extension to this inquiry examines pragmatist and post-structuralist concern for things-in-relation and otherness within sites of interaction, with particular bias to stressing the representational conditions under which human and nature are posited.

Ecocriticism has remained marginal in cultural studies yet its beginnings in the academy in the early 1990s as a site of resistance to Anglophone conceptions of continental theory that denied access to the real world, situates it at the heart of critical thinking. Here, human constructions (techne of art, thought, built environment etc.)

are viewed in the light of both the potential of negative poetics (relinquishing meaning or centrality of the human rather than the impossibility of communication) and the inseparability of nature and culture, environment and individual, as a means to read subjecthood (or being) located within the human and non-human world. Reciprocity between text and environment, or the politics of representation in ecocritical accounts, therefore, has "tended towards the phenomenological point that language is a deconstructible system abstracted from experience and evolved through metaphor" (Wheeler 7-8). Moreover, it is acutely sensitive to the fact that categories and forms of knowledge cannot be mistaken for things, but acknowledges that its conditions of possibility as a critical methodology are "certainly real" in that they are based in the hard bottom of empirical facts. I read an analogy between ecocritical politics of materialism and Burnside's emphasis on history. Both are evolutionary responses to bring forth the world. Burnside's poetics recapitulates rather than deconstructs the tension between an ecological poetics and one that is anthropogenic; the lyrical 'I' and the ontological 'I' in his poetics should be felt in association with Wallace Stevens, Paul Shepard, and Burnside's foregrounding of the historical, I argue. This foreground often evoked by the phenomenological -- or the writer's response within the poem to the phenomenological experience -- echoes the ecocritical project that is increasingly "thinking about the semantic and semiotic envelopes within which... a successful realism may remain caught" (8). One could turn to TLT as an ironic title, to the over-use of intertext as a means to offer relations and reworkings, or look at the particular stresses Burnside places in significant moments of the potentially transcendental and the potentially isolated phenomenological stance:

for all of them, the predicate was home,

if not the world of others, then the world  
 of all they left unsaid; *that* inwardness:  
 the house behind the houses in their dreams,  
 the house of cold, the rooms of fern and bone,  
 the refuge in a squall, the proof in storms. ("By Pittenweem" 4:  
 12-17 GS)

Burnside addresses his critics by emphasizing exactness while also leaving this open to plurality and multiplicity. The stress on "*that*" underwritten by the possibilities of language denotation, is to suggest a wide "predicate", which Burnside posits logically not grammatically (i.e. the sense being that of an unspecified term or relation, not a clause containing something about the subject), it works to give the disparate list the quality of "muted anagnorisis" (Borthwick). That is to say partial recognition coupled to linguistic trepidation is evident in the ethical qualification to the process of naming where the signified falls between multiple ascribed possibilities to be imbued with disparate aspects. This is Burnside's ecological disposition rather than a poetics of description. The historical aspect here is registered by the place-name (the town a few miles from Anstruther), the allusion to T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets (1943), and by the "pilots and whalers, authorized privateers, / fugitives, botanists, ships' surgeons, makers of maps" (Burnside "By Pittenweem" 4: 1-2) that have worked this area; they spark off this section entitled 'History', and echo in the silent traces of the 'I' which is filled at the end of the section with waiting, for the sake of feeling "the fullness of time itself" (Harrison Forests 161). This is the historical presence where the immediate is correlated to the recollection of the past, as with William Wordsworth, "suggesting thereby" Harrison argues, "that the origin lies deep in the reaches of the has-been and that its presence is repeatable, or recuperable, only through poetic memory". It is the anti-nostalgic poetic memory in Burnside's hands that moves what happened into what *happens*, and reads the soul's link to nature

in conflict with being condemned to the logos.

#### I.C. Burnside's Poetics Read as Ecopoetics

As a progression in Wordsworthian craft, Burnside's ecopoetics rethinks how imagination is intricately connected to experience, both on a personal level in response to history and on the level of the poet as a creator in alliance with the world which they behold. Here, nature as site (a temporal space and point of relation), shows that human engineered associations are key to understanding the meaning of place, and paradoxically, that place, ever temporal, relates to restlessness. In Burnside this takes on an Augustinian edge, the spiritual quest which acknowledges that desire is only ever assuaged temporarily in 'homes' i.e. sites of our mental construction. It is thus that two significant currents to Burnside's themes require presentation here. Firstly, this thesis' epigraph from Heidegger upon the soul being underway and following nature (Language 163-4) reminds the Romantic scholar of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's learning from Plotinus and from Friedrich von Schelling's System of Transcendental Idealism (1800): that the soul is drawn in *motion* and we should not look for the source, but to wait for it to shine upon us (Sartor Resartus, 1833-34). This metaphysical relationism is restated for the phenomenological scholar in Heidegger's Being and Time (1927) when he suggests that the source which the geographer establishes for a river "is not the springhead in the dale" (10). This means that it is not present-at-hand (or determined by ideas of terminus and origin), but ready-to-hand, i.e. discovered in its use: as the wind lives in sails of boats, the running river is a water power, thought-in-action is the site of awakening. In Burnside's poems the sense of resource *always in use* over standing reserve is offered in his attempt to freeze time or



accentuate the liminal site -- most especially at night, between the domestic and the wild or the natural and the urban -- where stillness or the border is viscerally alive and suggesting that the human, as with all of nature, is always already embedded and is never fully isolated. Unique and liminal moments like that of New Year or the change of season, Burnside argues:

are, in our experience, the moments when the person is susceptible to change, *where being is raw*, as it were, where identity is less fixed, more open to possibility" ("Poetry and a Sense of Place", my italics)

The indication of 'our experience' and 'as it were' suggests Burnside's knowledge of the human enveloping of the moment or *rawness* of world within the linguistic exactly at the point when the poet is attempting to articulate outside this frame. It is an example of Burnside dialoguing on the relationship between frames where he is entrapped, while also offering a view of the way out by forwarding and derealizing the frame. I locate this within patience and discovery as process and single modality in Burnside's metaphysical-ecological compound. It is why I chose to illuminate Stevens over all other poetic influences; the twist in Burnside is to address Stevens' imagination and write of the 'I' as an isolate defined only through being enmeshed with the other.

Burnside's Stevensian reworking of poems as relational versions of others within a textual ecology provides this thesis with an imperative to promote these poems -- sometimes selecting the least effective poems of the collections -- in order to show the method of thinking behind Burnside's ecopoetics. These instances in isolation sometimes fail to fulfil the pretensions of the conceptual structure of the volume in which the instance of the poem resides; furthermore, these poems can become pulled by another line of pragmatism -- namely the influence of William Carlos Williams, or of Elizabeth Bishop.

However, I am suggesting that Burnside's ecopoetics are to be first read in relation to Stevens and Burnside's anti-dualist position on the paradoxical contingent and non-contingent self/soul dialectic, as a means to understand the identity of the lyrical 'I' within prolegomenon.

With incredible consonance to Stevens' 'anecdote poems',<sup>5</sup> Ricou considers the dilemma of existential man's claim to existence through his mark on the land: the curious duality of man as nothing and as everything he creates, a lone vertical figure upon a horizontal land that is dominant and primordial regardless of the effort to humanize, articulate, and imaginatively encompass land (Vertical Man). However, while Ricou posits a shift from James Thomson, George Crabbe, and Oliver Goldsmith in post-Romantic interior landscapes and technically defined and limited areas of contemplation, he argues that the paradox of a deep bond with world and the idea of nature read as man's antagonist presented simultaneously, is one solved by prairie fiction's double motif of intruder and of prairie as the mirror of emptiness. Comparably, Burnside's consistent effort to write of 'something' and 'nothing' as ontological states and processes evokes existential thought and an inquiry into sense experience, "a sort of positive breakthrough to the essentially provisional nature of the seen world... and the invisible region that hovers at our backs" ("The Wonder of Daylight" 55).

As indicated by his use of the human ecologist Paul Shepard in TLT -- taken out of context of the anthropological contemplation of the prairie (Animals 35) -- Burnside's poetry is charged by what Ricou (moving on from his consideration of the Confederation poets in his earlier work towards a deeper literary environmental aspect) labels

---

<sup>5</sup> Particularly "Earthy Anecdote" and "Anecdote of the Jar", but also "Anecdote of Canna", "Anecdote of Men by the Thousand", and "Anecdote of the Prince of Peacocks" (Harmonium, 1923).

"proprioception" ("Ecotopia" 55). This draws from the lexus of sensorimotor accounts of vision and visual consciousness to offer an account of representation and mind (Noë). Proprioception in its true sense, reads a wider chief co-ordinative centre or rather group of centres of the reflex system. Vision is a skilful bodily action (comportment) more than a perception that happens to us. Proprioception confers with the other senses, most centrally vision, as a means to inform human conceptions on space and the physical properties of world. In Ricou's sense of the word, it confers *primarily* with the textual mediation of the world and how this informs our conceptions, too. This is the physiological aspect of Burnside's verse, which brings together mind and body, and marries the North American poetic to Bate's vision of the post-Romantic ("Eco-Laurels"). For Ricou, proprioception, as developed in the Black Mountain School, North Carolina, and the Tish movement on the Canadian West Coast, is a model of bodily stimulations enveloped in an interdependent closed system. He clarifies this as a model of ecology reflected in the poetic process where the poet responds to momentary stimuli in the instant of perception and simultaneously acknowledges how his reaction and writing affects the perception of nature and the perception of language itself. This aspect within verse and self-reflection, rather than stance, intrigues Burnside, for it is perspectival self-consciousness that keeps track of one's relation to the world (Noë 2) and it supports interdependent exchange between physical ecology and mental ecology that Burnside draws from Shepard.

I read Burnside's most significant poems as constructions from this manner which negates the anthropogenic frame that presupposes nature as secondary subject: Burnside's 'I' is part of the ecology he studies. Bate is correct to mention Burnside's neo-Romantic concerns, which I marry to this North American disposition: to

investigate the possibility of "simultaneously resist[ing] the Romantic fallacy of ascribing feelings to inanimate nature", while also "embracing the Romantic faith in the solidity and sanctity of earthly things" ("Eco laurels"). However, Bate's thesis has been criticized for offering a pre-political naïve pastoralism, which understates a relationship of the reflections upon political economy and the intellectual poetics of Romanticism (Phillips, Parham). The radical politics of the local and the geo-political viewed through ecological and biospherical models is offered in Burnside's writings (Polemic, "A Science of Belonging", "Bunkered by Mr Big", "Iona", "Masculinity", "Mind the Gap", "Poetry and a Sense of Place", "Strong Words",), which can be read with proprioception as foundation. Moreover, it is captured in the second "History" poem of TLT: "but this is the problem: how to be alive / in all this gazed-upon and cherished world / and do no harm" (63-65). The tension in the poetic line resonating with the parents' fear of bringing a child into this world of ecological crisis and war is one married to the poet's trepidation in naming the world but attempting to enter into relation with that beyond the virtual and the badly mediated while also recognizing the poetic result (often measured against or parallel to the phenomenological). However, this thesis tracks the poetics of ecological consciousness and the ecology of poetic consciousness, which is the disciplined engagement of the lyric as a structured relationship to nature in the logos and fundamentally presented in terms of craft and intuition in the aesthetic of the contemporary era. Here, Burnside's poetry registers phenomenological experience within historical context. I do not see Burnside draw this from a Scottish-Irish hinterland. I clarify this here before moving to a brief comparative study of his contemporaries.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> In addition to the context offered through Oswald, Oliver and

In Identifying Poets (1993) Crawford reads Burnside's complex development of the theme of home, whether derived from displaced roots or not, as "an awareness of the uncertain construction of identity" (146). Crawford selects "Exile's Return" (Th) but fails to articulate that there is no return, that a move back to origin is impossible as that origin is mere construct: it cannot, Burnside states, "be assumed like tartan" (3). Although racked by memory and myth, our common universal (i.e. non-nationalist) condition is that we have moved on in the knowledge that "years ago" (16) we passed on stories to secure us, "pretending we could find our own way home" (17). Our post-modernist notion of the destabilized self fuels the double stress on "own" suggesting fiction and possession, if read through Burnside's later poetry and the poetics of relinquishment as something that we can only *pass on* (relinquish). It is also, rather than an Old World emphasis of being of the land, the discovery modality that allows the land to arrive in us, moment by moment -- satisfaction, perhaps, over tormented humanity. Burnside insists upon "a view of identity that sets terrain and habitat before tribal allegiances", here "the integrity of place before the idea of nation or state, the pagan calendar before the atomic clock" can come forth ("Science" 93):

It seems we have arrived. Or, more,  
the place arrives in us, a cool  
waking to the smell of pinks and cloves,  
to milky twilights standing at the door.

That sense of nothing changed - the cold  
metalwork of starlings on a wire  
and neighbours' houses huddled in the dawn  
like clockwork toys, the old

memories of streets and garden fires  
and rain-laced windows watching us for years,

---

Graham in this exordium, I urge the reader to draw from p. 51, n. 19 (Burnside's listing of contemporary American influences) and ch. 4 sec. II.A. (the context for Burnside's refusal to engage with McGonigal's frame in Irishness in Modern Scottish Writing).

expecting some event, just making fit  
our incomplete deceptions and desires. ("Home" CK)

"Seems" stresses mental figuration over embodiment or emplacement. I do not read these lines in the manner that Crawford reads "Exile's Return" (Th), as the "uncertainties of identity and homing glimpsed in an explicitly Scottish context" (Identifying 147), because I do not see the highly personal example as *context* but as an example of unity brought about by the cast of the poet's mind from cosmos to dwelling place. It is the occlusion of bounded, labelled geography, rather than an indication of place that informs the paradigm and the language. Burnside has spoken of Th's two exile poems and his return to Scotland by stating that he "did not feel like an 'exile' in England, so much as exiled within a capitalist and industrial society", one that undervalued "land, the arts, rational thought, civic values, compassion, the imagination"; while northern Britain may offer a different value space, Burnside stipulates "I feel just as much an exile now as I ever did" (Dosa interview 10). His disinterest in "nations" or "belonging to a nation at all" (17) may well delineate the 'national' psyche that he attunes to, but it is more important to stress that he is "bound to the terrain around [him]", that reflects "a relationship with a piece of land and that could be anywhere". This is a testament that I put under a little pressure in chapter four by presenting complementary Scottish sensibilities, but I am more sympathetic to the dispossession and humanist anxiety that Burnside promotes as a working-class anti-capitalist who refuses to place self-determination and devolutionary values (sound ecological premises) within an acute and particular Scottish context alone. The point of "anywhere", for Burnside, derives from sympathy to a tradition outside of the islands: "I'd probably never have considered writing poetry without having been exposed to poetry" he states "from outside the British context"

(19).<sup>7</sup> I feel that this should not be ignored when critically assessing his cultural poetics.

In "Home", much like in "Exile's Return", it is the false economy of the "making fit" of our stories to desires that will be forever "incomplete", loose and open if we allow them to be. In fact, the attempt to pin specific bordered places as context for a form of diagnosis and classification is exactly what Burnside's poetic epistemology seeks to undermine. As method this diagnosis is a version of scientific taxonomy that constructs a truth of its own, while strong to convince one part of the mind this method brings its futility into relief by the thoroughly convincing things and fullness that it leaves out. I read Burnside's poetry developing the interest in symbiosis and the transitions of the natural world -- evoked in Ricou's proprioception -- as one where "Home", open to any place, can be reread in "Koi" and "Blackbird" (TLT) especially, and throughout TAD and TLT as a poetic study of the exchanges between physical ecology and mental ecology. This is the most important aspect of Burnside's poetry and is the central point of interest for his readers. It promotes poetry that is not a facile pastoral, or 'back to nature' politics, but a work seen as complex, nuanced and sensitive, working out of *how nature comes back to us*. Here, poetics as ecological work beyond blood, soil, and categories, are the hub of the circle of hermeneutics *reconfigured* as ecopoetic proprioception in Burnside's "post-phenomenological inflection of high Romantic poetics" (Bate Song 262). My thesis tracks this both in Burnside's poetry as an example which Bate crystallizes in this phrase and in the Romanticist intellectual hinterland and Burnside's interest in an American tradition.

---

<sup>7</sup> Central to this is not only the North American dimension that I outline in the thesis, but Burnside's interest in Spanish twentieth century poets, Federico Garcia Lorca, Antonio Machado and Jorge Guillen (Dosa interview 9).

### I.C.i. Stepping Back to View Post-phenomenological Hermeneutics

My thesis does not represent the measurement of traditional interpretive models against ecocritical and phenomenological criticism; it is fundamentally concerned with the progress in Burnside's poetry towards an ecopoetics. In taking his oeuvre chronologically, chapter by chapter, my critical methodology progresses to an experimental criticism in the final chapter, as I move towards what a phenomenological criticism could be for reading contemporary ecopoetics -- this interfaces intertextual theory, post-phenomenological theory, and North American poetics.

The role of the 'Framework' chapter is to act as ground for this development in the thesis; it is positioned as a single event for the reader, both clarifying my position vis-à-vis Bate within an ecocritical understanding of the post-Romantic, and indicating future critical moves. The chapter following this, 'Formations', is thus radically different in its more traditional critical tools, that only later shift -- as the poetry shifts -- to grounds for reading the ecological aspects of the concept of 'dwelling' as both the verb to live and to think, respectively heightened in the collections represented in chapters four and five (TAD, TLT). The parallel development in oeuvre and literary method finally rests upon intertextuality as a means to address the contradiction of non-anthropocentric ecopoetics delicately centred upon an inquiry into authorial consciousness. But, it is consciousness, I stress, that is more historical and collective in a wide sense, than it is authorial.

Burnside is, perhaps, more akin to Mary Oliver than any other contemporary poet is. This is stated not to compare genius but to associate their observational mode made through patience and tonal precision reflecting on the fictive transcription of nature. Both



poets dissolve lyrical pronominal frames into subjective awe, which are collapsed as readers share the site of amazement and awareness of the distance to cover between nature and human, poet and reader (I speak of this as the lyric's proprioception being paralleled in the reader's experience of processing Burnside's interconnected poetry). Burnside attempts to capture a view of the world while his work, like Oliver's, is driven by contemplations of the conditions of possibility for experience, relation, and (re)construction; this predilection fuels their phenomenological dimensions. These suggest, to me, that Burnside's refusal to give voice to the natural world through plummeting the lyric into the consciousness of natural objects (trees, birds, rivers etc.), promotes a lack of appropriation/territorialization, and foregrounds an ethics of the 'I' to report the immanent through encounters by which it is involved (particularly transparent in his deer poems). It is here that a subtle difference between Burnside and Alice Oswald can be discovered, but more importantly, a distinction between him and his colleague at St Andrews, Kathleen Jamie. Jamie's The Tree House (2004) democratically wrestles between the conscious states of human and (those imagined) of nature as distinct ontological modalities, proffered by stance, aperture, and perspective working through the possibilities of phenomenism. This opposition can be viewed in distinction to her prose work, Findings (2005). Here nature writing meets a fusion of autobiography and travel writing with the anthropocentric vantage heightened in an exploration of surroundings. These drive forth the domestic frame to negate any transcendence from the history of negotiations within lived experience, the site where no relations are fixed. It appears to complement Burnside's poetics. At the same time it understands "if we work always in words, sometimes we need to recuperate in a place where language doesn't join up" (Findings 164) and the prose dwells in these places before

moving on toward psychogeography and a conversation *with* the natural world.<sup>8</sup> This work fundamentally proposes a technique of *noticing*, what Sampson has identified as the “quality of attention” in new nature poetry (117); furthermore, it speaks of the time of world reflected in the time of reading, that which Burnside has spoken of in light of Jamie’s poetry: “for the duration of the poem the reader experiences the same way of looking” (Scott “In the Nature of Things”), something that resonates with his contention against nature poetry: “I never write poems *about* anything, but the context of the poem is metaphorical” (Dosa 11, original emphasis). This is noticing instilled in the reader.

I find a subtle difference between Jamie’s way of looking and Burnside’s metaphor of vision, the latter is poetry “creating a space” and intending “to stay close to a spontaneous impulse” (22). As an inescapably anthropocentric centring, this does not mean it is anthropogenic i.e. the experience is *to* the human but the world is not *of* the human. The impossibility of thinking yourself out of the world in Jamie (a concern shared by Burnside) investigates human pathology within a poetics of *intention* and *involvement*, which does not resonate with the American impulse to the degree that Burnside’s poetry does: his poetic shifts back one degree into the more philosophical and abstract poetics of *perception* and *the grounds of experience*, rather than “the care and maintenance of our noticing” once in a site (Jamie Findings 109).

Burnside’s human ecology in his poetry does not take the subject of nature as his starting point, either through the Jamiean tension in consciousness (or modality) or anthropocentric lens underwritten

---

8 See “Aird’s Moss” (2005) -- a palimpsest of recent wanderings contemplating the slow reclaim of nature in the post-industrial landscape of the author’s great-grandparents’ home transposed onto family stories, nineteenth century census ordinance surveys, histories, and union reports of the Lowland mining village of Darnconner, Ayrshire.

through refining techniques of observation. Burnside, as with Oliver, takes the subject of human experience to bring forth the *context* of the madeness of our transcription of nature, in word and in mind. He is a poet of the logos as much as one of the oikos, and much like the paradigm of his most repetitive motif, the image of the father lighting a fire, his poetics wrestle Promethean impulses and innovations with authoritarian context and affordance: he is constituted by but estranged from things (nature and culture). Thus radical phenomenological poetics -- which in the final analysis of TLT neither moves inward to poetic consciousness nor displaces this with fragmentary objects -- offers the unification of these through the positing of history as the framework for our response to/from/within the world. It marries de Man's post-Romanticism to Burnside's metaphysical inflection of the material: "to understand natural changes from the perspective of history, rather than history from the perspective of natural changes" ("Walter Benjamin's Task of the Translator" Resistance 83). I explore this in chapter five as my reading of TLT moves towards conclusions for the entire thesis, a move from a critical position that has read the text's thematized reflections of its own relation to the structure of discourse.

## II. Contemporary Context

The poetry of Burnside's highly respected contemporary, Oswald, foregrounds a specific attunement to sonic formation that finds an equivalent project in Burnside's loco-ego-description. Ted Hughes' poem "The Horses" (The Hawk in the Rain, 1957) introduced Oswald to the idea that "instead of describing something (which always involves a separation between you and the object) you could replay it alive in the form of sound" (Oswald "Wild Things") -- a position restated in her reading of Season Songs (1976) ("Altering"). Burnside posits

phenomenological experiences as a pre-requisite to ecological acknowledgement much as Oswald's poetics of the "real" "presence" of sound operates beyond deconstruction; something clarified as the "linguistic and anthropological survey [which contests] that history should take precedence over geography [by positing that] the site of the poem can incorporate geography into history" (Bristow 167). Yet Burnside's counterpoint is delivered by historically contingent subjectivity distinct for its colouration via the motion of the landscape and the encounter between external world, sense perception, memory, and mood -- an emphasis on process and context rather than language to the degree pronounced in Oswald. I shall clarify this further in my exposition of the ecophenomenality posited within Burnside's poetics throughout the thesis.

Oswald is Britain's foremost ecological-geographical grounded poet whose reading of Hughes inspires her to reach for "the whole sacred and speechless background of nature". The documentary, local reportage and knowledge within Oswald's poetry would not be undervalued by Burnside, yet his reflective stance and metaphysical inquiry opens his landscape-mindscape to the "speechless background" (Oswald "Altering") in a different manner.<sup>9</sup> While Oswald offers an absolute agency encompassing human and natural as twin elements of the same, Burnside is deeply engaged with the realm of perception and the implications of apartness heralded within.

certain evenings a little before the golden  
foam of the horizon has properly hardened  
you can see a tiny iron island  
very close indeed to the sun. "Excursion to the Planet Mercury"  
1-4 (Woods etc.)

This distinct poem in the remarkable Woods etc. suggests that the poet can modernise and compress the lyric of Dart and the oral

---

<sup>9</sup> See Burnside, "The Rhythms of Wind, Tide and God".

(Georgic) tradition into unique imaginary semantic visions. The poet's understanding of the limits of perception promotes the natural world order over the human place within it, adumbrating the 'I' with the second person pronoun presented via the human pulse but dispelled by the larger cosmos. The difference between Oswald's indigenous poetics of the settler and Burnside's vagrant poetics of re-inhabitation -- although both of these are the reverse of colonization -- underlines the differences in the poets' itinerant wanderings. While Burnside and Oliver write of the *encounter of nature*, Oswald speaks of the interface between human and nature via the process of making (i.e. poesis or work) while Burnside offers muted poetics to emphasize the *potentiality of events*, the suspension of thinking as contemplation of the conditions of possibility for experience. Moreover, Burnside's poetry does not evolve from a single point of origin, i.e. a tradition beginning with Wordsworth and finding influences running through John Clare and Edward Thomas, and through toward Ted Hughes, that is suggested by Oswald despite her incorporation of the classical. It is a singular contention that I argue: Burnside's poetry distinguishes itself from a British framework through its engagement with phenomenology and American post-Romanticism. Thus, Wordsworthian restlessness of the human spirit -- that "something evermore about to be" (The Prelude, 1805 6: 542)<sup>10</sup> -- is given discrete tones of alienation rather than latent Christian revelation. Thus I position Burnside alongside his contemporaries, Jorie Graham, Jane Hirshfield, Jamie, Michael Longley, Oliver, Oswald, and Charles Tomlinson.<sup>11</sup> The British and Irish poets find significant forerunners in the nature poetry of Seamus Heaney and Hughes, while the Americans position themselves within a post-Transcendentalist and post-Modernist idiom. All in

---

<sup>10</sup> All references are to the 1805 text, unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>11</sup> See p. 51, n. 19.

differing degrees are committed to an ecology of mind.

Burnside and Oliver offer a challenge to the criticism upon Romantic consciousness that is predicated on the boundaries between self and nature, consciousness and unconsciousness, soul/body, and transcendence/immanence. The Romantic attempt to unify these mythologically opposed pairs becomes a crisis in representation of alienated consciousness where new unities are only availed in transcendent imaginations. As with post-Stevensian poetics, these poets understand the potentiality of events over intellectualized contemplations of the conditions of possibility for experience, relation, and (re)construction. One may read an emphasis in the poetry from the a priori condition under which empirical objects can be further determined (Kant) to the experience and way of the world where the disadvantages of the phenomenological lyric is counterbalanced. Burnside and Oliver write lyrics whose accent of the crisis of meaning is underwritten by contemporary crises of the disappearing world inflected by metaphysical colouration: "if this suggests late Romantic concepts of immanence", Carol Rumens ruminates, "the religious sensibility often seems more eastern than western, more Zen than Judaeo-Christian", beside "passionately conservationist principles underlining the reverence".

Burnside's voice is consistent in the manner of Oliver's narrow palette. It is located in a state of awe vibrating with energy charged by an exploration of the tension between observation and visionary experience often located during cognition of the margin or the edge of perception. Both poets take their subject not of nature but of *human experience in the world often reflected in the encounter of nature*, which enables them to investigate ideas of perception and epistemology, and modes of being. Oliver's consciousness motif is threaded by the movement of mind within natural cycles and is

articulated as a fluid immersion (McNew 65-66), whereas Burnside offers poesis by forwarding relation of body to cultural history. Here, the qualification to pure phenomenological poesis suggests a vision of soul travelling with body and mind susceptible to the flux of nature within history. This is vehicle to the mental location of subjecthood within context. It forwards the implicit question, not of the existence of soul, but as Christensen reads in Oliver, "how durable it is", and if soul "is merely a product of consciousness that vanishes at the moment of death" (138); in Graham's words it is "the mutability of the external meeting the mutability of the internal" ("The Art of Poetry" 66) and thus resonates with Burnside contingent-non-contingent paradox and desire to live as a spirit (Dosa interview 19).

This poetic is gaining recognition in American literary theory as the common pragmatic mysticism and empowerment of the post-Stevensian fold, that which could be expressed as the poetics of doubt and awe coupled in a single track of potentiality.<sup>12</sup> It is secured contemporaneously by Oliver and most acutely in Graham, as a spiritual process forever reworked to measure the contingent and the non-contingent (what is necessary and what is fictional). The Weilian context reveals poetic expression of an immanent void and forwards the Stevensian imagination (and self) as part of a broader creation where the world arises simultaneous to the de-creation of self, resulting in the phenomenological dissolved into a wider, emergent process. It is the post-Romantic version of the sublime

---

<sup>12</sup> See Kit Fan, below, p. 332; also Ira Sadoff "Trafficking in the Radiant: The Spiritualization of American Poetry", American Poetry Review, 34.4 (2005): 11-14, and Timothy C. Baker, "Praying to an Absent God: The Poetic Revealing of Simone Weil," Culture, Theory and Critique, 47.2 (2006): 133-147. These essays are given the correct theoretical and historical context when read alongside Joseph Riddel's boundary 2 article "Interpreting Stevens: An Essay on Poetry and Thinking" (1972) which reads Heideggerian poetics and Helen Vendler's analysis of Stevens in On Extended Wings (1969).

encounter where an approach to the void is an approach to the divine not yet manifest. A site, traditionally, where poetry reveals its own limits; thus, for Stevens, promoting the qualified phenomenological, "the seeing and unseeing in the eye" (Stevens "Notes Toward A Supreme Fiction" 6:18 Collected), a version of the non-intrusive "conceiving self" (Dogget 284). Burnside appears to lay challenge to this, or struggles in his attempts to achieve this, or forwards the difficulties or paradoxes presented in poetically constructing this position, as I shall show. For Eliot, this was "passion, housed in the transitory and irrational, [which became] the main obstacle in his quest for fixity and permanence" (Sadoff 13); it is a quest abandoned in Burnside following an inquiry into binding and loosening (TLT).

Extending this onto Burnside may read his presentation of drift over stability (TAD), and the cyclical return of nature and history, as a move to forward a critique of progress within the narrative arc of the myth of redemptive perfectibility rather than him offering an ecological phenomenological stance as the resolution of subject-object relations. However, in the light of Graham, Oliver, and Anne Carson, this poetic represents a dismantling of wisdom and incompleteness where the "text cannot be a creation complete in itself, but neither can it fully reveal the void" (Baker 138). I read Burnside's version of this being consistent with Graham and Oliver, and one that suggests Heideggerian 'sparing' in its incompleteness and prosaic nature, again elevated or attempted in 'full' in TLT.

Stevens writes on the possible consolidation of the internal and external:

The subject matter of poetry is not that 'collection of solid,



static objects extended in space,' but the life that is lived in the scene that it composes; and so reality is not that external scene but the life that is lived in it ("The Noble Rider and The Sound of Words" 1942, Necessary 25).

It is this space where slight shifts in attention in Burnside and Oliver dramatically highlight Stevens' model of variation as an attempt to construct home in the same manner that he writes the self: as a verb, a vessel of process (Voros 83-84).

In short, Burnside is as an interpreter or reckoner of our times, a practitioner of fictive truth highly sensitive to the world that exists for our perception and re-imagination as the word's etymology suggests. To stretch or to reach is retained in the Dutch rekken and German reken but lost in Old English. The root rek found in recche, is "to tell, narrate, expound", as well as to "pursue one's course" and "proceed in one's way". Old Frisian rekon and Low German reken, furthermore, designate a quality particularly used to represent an unobstructed street. Burnside's use of the verb for the anthology celebrating the anniversary of the publication of Silent Spring (1962) by zoologist and biologist, Rachel Carson carries ideas of measurement and transport in the pre-modern sense of unmediated realization in addition to judgement in the contemporary economical and theological use.<sup>13</sup> Deploying this word as the raising of consciousness suggests that poetry -- as a visionary capacity of our species -- is something that runs against evolutionary progress as either random mutation or a response to threat, more it teaches us new ways of understanding nature holistically.

## II.A. Literary Review

A considerable percentage of this thesis traces the space between the publication of Th and the publication of TLT. I will briefly

---

<sup>13</sup> Oxford English Dictionary 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://dictionary.oed.com>>.

introduce this through the criticism of Burnside's British and Irish peers.

Mark Wormald considered Burnside's first collection as one that "sets out to formulate a creed"; a creed that marries the fidelity of the world of the poem to that of the world we share, to a science of community. This is an accurate analysis illustrated by the early preoccupation with death, dreams, and memories in Burnside's first three collections. Burnside's early poetic output works through an idea of individualism that acknowledges the empirical world alongside "intangible presences"; these presences, for Tom Nairn, show how "the borderlines between the actual, the tangible and dream, delusion and illusion" are deconstructed (178). I follow Nairn and read this deconstruction coupled to an opening of the intellectual domain(s) in which the poems operate and during which "the esoteric connotations of such questioning is vividly encapsulated". The creed that interrogates epistemological frameworks finds its place within a poetics of settlement, as Alan Riach finds "the pact one makes with one's childhood or self between selves" is one "touching the spaces between imagined certainties" (108) and this is why Burnside's poetry is tinged with the metaphysical and the non-contingent soul alongside the empirical and historical ground.

An initial analysis provided by Wormald, Nairn, and Riach, suggests a mystical poetics where an indeterminate site or selfhood resists the tangible. However, Burnside's poetry defies this mystical inflection -- as we see in his progression toward the empirical and to the ecological as a means to writing 'home' -- yet has remained concerned with a poetics of awe. This is unmistakable for its environmentalist inflection from the front cover photograph of an oil spill, the reference to the tragedy of the commons ("Runners"), and its use of the American Sioux figure Black Elk (1863-1950). This

figure alludes to the elite "mythic", which Paula Gunn Allen defines as incorporating the spiritual past, the mystery of experience, and a creative sense of 'the word' over a fictive sense; a site where the private self is redirected into communal reverie via non-divisive language that leads to the dynamic fulfilment inherent in sharing breath and song (242-5). This imperative, incredibly, is sustained right through to the complex ecological poesis of TLT. It is sacred in that it involves "an intangible but very real power over force" (258), what Burnside has indicated as "right dwelling" over "violence" (Dosa interview 19-20). This resonates with an ecological ethics of relinquishment as a means to restraining unsustainable, anthropocentric force, and couples with Burnside's desire to "understand the choices, implications and possibilities of dwelling in a 'world'" ("On The Light Trap" 8) with an intelligence attuned to that beyond the imagined certainties while also rationally finding the "moral dimension" to actions (Oxley 64). Moreover, this site of Aristotlean rationality and Kantian ethics is viewed as *energy*, which is figured as being lost or "broken" in the title poem ("The hoop") but is supported by the British pre-Christian Green Man deity of rebirth and healing (significant conceptual counters): it is perhaps the first move to open the aperture into Burnside's ecological praxis. Later, more subtle referencing to exile, ecological poetics, and American ideas of home (TAD, TLT, TGN) replay the energy field within the wake of Burnside's indictment of late Capitalist failings, "the political ground zero of the Imperium" (Oxley 59).

Moving forward to the reception of the TLT, it is obvious that a consideration of the volume in isolation can deliver negative conclusions upon Burnside's output. It has been argued, "a poem that's exact about mystery without being exact about meaning is always going to remain meaningless"; that is to say, poetry is open to criticism when its modality is felt as a "descriptive that eludes

description" (Richardson 133). Alongside Richardson, Lucas reads Burnside's elusion as "irresolution" (29), Whyte as "befuddlement" (81). For Borthwick, however, Burnside's use of language "is calculated scrupulously not to evade but to capture the very quick of one's receptive experience of nature". As such, Burnside represents a model of the peripheral mental climate within Scottish poetry as outlined in Sean O'Brien's text The Deregulated Muse (1998). O'Brien understands Burnside's inquiry into belief, or upon the world absent of belief resonating with "insistent phantoms", which underline the fact that "something in the external world answers to an inner requirement" (47). Richardson's criticism outlines the lack of an explicit and centred meaning; he rejects sentimental intuition in Burnside because it is bound up in repetition and thus suggests inexact mysteriousness or unknowing that does not deliver something more tangible than the allusion to the soul: "something" as alien and unfathomable (134). This view is understandable and not wholly inaccurate yet it does not accept Poirier's (Transcendentalist and Pragmatist informed) view of language where if it is to represent the flow of individual experience it ceases to be an instrument of clarity and more commonly becomes superfluity manifest, language that makes the world less stationary and more transitional: "an effort to refloat the world" (Poetry 40). This is not to restate an intangible mystical element but, as I have shown in my reading of "By Pittenweem" (above) and I shall argue in chapter five when I read TLT in its full context, "something" does not represent uncertainty or vagueness in itself but should be read as a phenomenological based interaction between body and world: the inner requirement to reconcile, brokered by self and the impossibility of the phenomenological positing of the transcendental ego. This self writes "by taking the part of the human individual" (Sampson 116) while also advertising poeisis independent from "systematic,

impersonal ways of thinking which attempt to disown... the very people who create them" (116-117). It is the reverse view of Richardson, Lucas, and Whyte; as Longley has put it:

When you capture something with precision, you also release its mysterious aura. You don't get the mystery without the precision ("An Outsider Searching for His Home").

There is a dependency of the lyric here upon the soft-knowledge of attunement. This intuitive space is larger than the poetic gesture. It is a site where the languaged world is not necessarily considered only as a restrictive or compacted poetics but as a site of origin or heightened perception that lies outside the granular spectrum of the faculties of sense perception hard-wired to (reducible/determinate) meaning. This perceptive realm can be understood as a mode of induction: a process differentiated from abduction and deduction, for it does not propose a singular directional agency (subject to the world, world to the subject) nor does it assume meaning to exist a priori (Peirce). The creed or poetics of 'something' makes no initial distinction about the world in its initial encounter (it is not until the movement from the particular to the general where the formation of laws, principles, and judgements are found), and thus allows it to exist on its own terms.

This is the phenomenological position taken in Bate's review of Burnside's collection where it is read as an ecologically sensitive model of knowledge and understanding -- or better, *acknowledgement*, an under-used ecocritical term despite its distance from finalized and categorical thinking. Doubt alongside reason and argument is central to any faith or belief system, and before it is extended into hyperbolic rhetoric, it can enable a world to operate outside the human cognitive faculties -- or to extend this, to operate beyond technological apparatuses and the modern science of man. Once these

are reduced, doubt evolves into an engagement with "something" but is in-itself a lesser form of pattern-seeking meditation afforded by the politics of visual encounters or pre-formulated categorical impositions. We are reminded that it is possible to "simultaneously resist the Romantic fallacy of ascribing feelings to inanimate nature", as Bate stipulates, "and to embrace the Romantic faith in the solidity and sanctity of earthly things" ("Eco laurels"), but also that it requires a particular politics of representation.

To read the mystical as something impossible to capture without misnaming it is to lead to a false conclusion, I assert in my analysis of negative poetics in chapter one. Peter Robinson falls into Richardson's territory when he remarks that "the great theme of what can or cannot be redeemed is scouted by [Burnside's] gestural verse" (11), for the gestural, to Robinson, can only signify failure. He continues: "[it is] neither inhabited nor inflectedly addressed" and thus remains within a world apart from the human. Robinson notes Burnside's use of the "fragment" and line that is "piecemeal" (11), that which John Redmond sees as "hastily written drafts of each other" (23), which actually emphasizes the "habitual nature" that is forwarded in Burnside's suspicion of both intuitive emotion in isolation and the decisive presentation of science that these fragments and versions gesticulate towards. As redress, to order the attitude or movement of something (self, verse) and to initiate a contemplation of something (object world, emotion) that operates beyond the linguistic world, it is a *manner*. That is to say, the poetic resolution to this problem -- resisting ascribing human models upon the inanimate and assuring the (desirous) permanence and inviolability of the world -- should bring the way that things operate to the foreground rather than present how this can be reduced to human frameworks for instrumental advantage. Here, the phenomenological technique coupled to the 'I' suggests an historical

politics of representation with an emphasis on 'the way' of the world and its terms, in Burnside's hands it lends itself to Taoist inflection.

Burnside's attention to how things appear, how nature offers various agencies and manifestations forever changing through time, is central and an obvious ecologically sound motif. It is this attention and consistent sensitivity that fuels Burnside's resistance to anthropocentrism within a poetics of nature and being-in-the-world; moreover, it is where his poetics are aligned to political dissidence and why it has brought anthologists to state that Burnside is "perhaps the most quietly and pervasively influential voice in British poetry in the last twenty-five years" (Paterson 26). The following sections advance this argument by preparing ground for a phenomenological understanding of Burnside's work that replays the anti-dualist metaphysical resonance of his poetry stressed in the way of the world and of the mind.

## II.B. Post-Kantian Preface

As a neo-Romantic practitioner, Burnside is interested in the empirical and in the ineffable, in the gap between the unnamed and the named where the category of understanding is not present. His ecopoetic effects sustained energy as process in the linguistic, post-intuitive state where (as with experience and intellection) more than sense data resides as an *affordance* for assertion and cognition by the human. Rather than a necessary abstraction that relinquishes the visual to understand the universal, this ground and latency is a form of acknowledgement reminiscent of the site of possibilities of action defined by J.J. Gibson: the "complementarity of the animal and the environment" (127). It is worth pausing here:

It's not the bird itself,  
But what it does

the vanishing -  
is what we come to learn;

though nothing in the day  
feels different:

the usual morning  
    street trees           lighted yards  
the noise of traffic      out beyond the point

and hanging in the grey  
above our bed ("Blackbird" TLT 1:1-11)

Human action posits faith within utilitarian ethics, the domain of intellectual responsibility, and the obligation to others. In Burnside's promotion of the bird in process as symbol of the possibilities of the imagination rather than imagination as object, its movement and the mind's structuring are forms of the imagination's representation of itself. This is particularly enhanced by the couplet shifting into fractured lines where caesura affords opposition or daggered, multiple, and fragmented thinking yet moves to rest in a single view of suspension through the Wordsworthian deployment of "hanging", which forwards our learning from our shared habitat.<sup>14</sup> Here, the vanishing of transient bird meets permanence of human feeling; nature is entwined in the urban environment and human epistemology and dreams. Viewing human projects and evidential relations as the wider self promotes truth as action not representation (Rorty "Faith"). I wish to state that this thesis is neither concerned with the hinterland of intersubjective language games nor with enactive perception (body affecting mind)<sup>15</sup>; its objective is to widen critical positions that conclude with

---

<sup>14</sup> cf. The Prelude (5: 404-422).

<sup>15</sup> While I have deployed Noë's sense of proprioception, I maintain Ricou's material and poetic rendering of this concept over the enactive (bodily) sense. Thus my thesis is kept within Heideggerian phenomenology and does not enter the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961).



statements about "complementarity", a too easy consensus upon Burnside's poetic inquiry into what is foundational in experience: the communion of "a song, a guide" ("Blackbird" 15), the site of our ethics and techne.

It is claimed that Burnside is an authoritative voice in Scottish poetry (Paterson), a poet of paradox concerned with "combining an ambitious metaphysical reach", Jem Poster argues, "with a sharp attention to the detail of common things", where the things themselves inform the irreducible complexity of existence. This can be viewed in post-Kantian light without ignoring language as a transcendental topos of shared meaning.

The Romantic contemplation of order in the universe bearing analogy to human intelligence -- the correspondence or relationship between the structure of concepts and the structure of reality -- is part of the legacy that informs Burnside's verse. For Immanuel Kant, knowledge is the outcome of the interchange between sense and understanding. His defence of Newtonian absolute space viewed as a spatio-temporal framework reads space and time as the essential conditions of sense perception not properties of objects themselves -- they are terms that translate the world into consciousness. It is a progressive view of a priori things available only as forms imposed by mind rather than a higher creator. While David Hume argued that science is the only vehicle to detect the patterns of separate events in nature and that common life reveals the origin of ethics (A Treatise of Human Nature, 1739), the Kantian mind affords the possibility of synthesis, and opens the site of ethics to be debated. However, Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1781) delineates the concept of dualism from the distinction between appearances (phenomena) and the cause of these, things-in-themselves (noumena) operating within a transcendent realm not theoretically knowable. The unification of individual perceptions by the understanding -- given by the

categories as functions of judgement distinct from given concepts under which things fall, for they are derived from concepts that give unity to the synthesis of intuition (Young 110)<sup>16</sup> -- is restrained by Kantian dualism. The limits of metaphysics, of our knowledge and understanding, suggest the need for practical reason.

Burnside's "interrogation of the unending cycles of nature and the fleetingness of thought" (Lichtig) is coupled to the tension between an infinite world and a finite linguistic register emphasized by the poetic 'capture' of the world that alludes to the contingent self and non-contingent soul. This in turn disputes a distinction -- or raises the stakes of the implications of extending a foundational distinction -- between noumena and phenomena. The post-Kantian element to Burnside suggests that his project to rediscover the transcendental conditions of being from within an inquiry into the contingent self is one that measures only the quotidian and the empirical. He claims, "that we can't actually say that the spirit or the soul exists in any other way except through the material" (Burnside et. al., The Poetry Quartets). This has contemporary implications.

We are compelled to read a fundamental resistance by the poet to the use of land and energy as economic resources. Burnside propels history into contemporary context to understand that "violence arises from the tendency to objectify others" (Dosa interview 19); not only does this action conceal the notion of soul, but promotes unmeaningful relations, too. This vision can liken the current use of

---

<sup>16</sup> In Kant, intuition is brought to concepts. It relates to a single object and is immediate (whereas a concept is general and mediate): not sensible but an immediacy or "phenomenological presence to the mind" (Parsons 70). For Hume, intuitive reasoning is a priori and as thus cannot be used to ground inductive inferences (using past events to predict future events) for persistent regularities can logically end (An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, 1748). For clarification and from hereon, I use the notion of intuition in the Bergsonian sense of being a fully developed method.

the Scottish countryside to the ecological loss of the Highland clearances -- both acts of the "enclosure of the imagination" (Burnside "Bunkered by Mr. Big"). However, Burnside's stress upon practical engagement with everyday reality is open to a wider materialism, which through its theological resonance but ecological deployment provides his unique post-Romanticism. This accent of the threshold and the provisional has been articulated most deftly by Don Paterson as "radiant meditations [upon the] transparent natural world numen" (26), the reader is directed to my reading of TAD (ch. 4) with this in mind. Two points are to be made in respect of this.

Firstly, rather than functioning as static borders, boundaries in Burnside are alive and active fields of practice, transparent to the degree that they show the thing (the object of perception, or the encounter) as a moment or event within a field where the human has trespassed. This liminal voice is not simply peripheral, it is an accent of the hidden and decentred, or that which is in-between states i.e. in process.

All afternoon, the blackbird comes and goes,  
 returning the shade that glimmers in the blood  
 to a silence between the trees  
 and the winter sky,

and shall I follow, taking up the life  
 that waits to happen: creature memories  
 and blood-heat; colours; stitchwork in the bones;  
 the singsong heart that beats amongst the leaves? ("Blackbird"  
 3: 14-21)

The questioning voice is already answered in the emphasis of threading in 'stitchwork' echoing the positing of 'shade' as a darkened double and potential for metempsychosis. Here, the idea of silence is given further meaning in the use of comma and breath, often evoked unconsciously before conjunction and article, stretched subtly by line ending. Interestingly, as a form of relinquishment of both centre and autonomous self, this voice is most apparent in

Burnside's public performances where the poet does not sing the poetry (the music emphasized or stressed) but foregrounds spaces of silence within the verse by accenting nothing like meter or sense, but words and whiteness, a space the human as language animal finds difficult to enter into (hence the question).

By contrast, in an expansive modality, the effects of letting words linger and dwell in the spaces and moments between things, heightens points of connection and relation. Presenting the shape of the poem with (non-)sound rather than through inflection offers the participation of the listener to enter poems neither "made, [n]or composed" but "heard" (Burnside "Listening To The Silence" 8). This participative poetics, heightened during performance, is not ground for reader response theory; it is indicative of the poet's position with respect to structure. It also relates to what Stevens envisions as the possibility of poetics: "Some aZuence, if only half-perceived, / In the poverty of their words" ("The Planet on the Table" 13-14 Collected). Two statements assist an understanding of this here. First, as an extension to disinterest in form as a determinant (Dosa interview 22), Burnside views himself as a maker composing music in the mind exerting "no conscious decision on the shape of a poem" (Oxley 62). Second, Burnside's auditory imagination is in tune with the lyric that offers "nothing less than a matrix upon which all time may be mapped" (Burnside "Place"), "taking up the life / that waits to happen" ("Blackbird" 18-19). Thus, the poet views mediation as something overtly concerned with the synergy between the reception through things and the amplification by things (the individual as receiver, the poet as maker), and, moreover, reads the poetic site as the balance between the continuum and contingency of language and experience. I see this being represented through the natural world "amongst the leaves" ("Blackbird" 21), embedded in relation and action. However, this under-emphasis on form is troubling to the

contemporary reader who is lead by the shape of the printed verse and deployment of meter, particularly expansive and under the influence of Williams after ANS. However, I guide the reader into this Burnsidean realm through sensitivity to Stevens' "long, discursive sequences of his later period" (Burnside in Stevens Selected xii) by reading the dynamics between language and experience as one given over to terms of life as rawness open to change (the Weilian philosophy behind Stevens' elaborations) in my readings of "Halloween" (MOT) and "Epithalamium" (ANS), key landmark poems in Burnside's oeuvre (ch. 3 and ch. 4, respectively).

Secondly, in relation to Paterson's comment above, I read Kant's Critique of Practical Reason (1788) postulating a noumenal self in search of a supreme principle of morality. The Lutheran matrix informing this self as a condition of free will, which leads rather than follows passions, is understood as a self-governing moral agent (Wood 71). It is negotiated in respect to Burnside's attention to the determined experiential and historic phenomenal self located within a site of repose and action. I read this not located within leadership but somewhere between discovery and witnessing, the paused emphasis before following the way of the world ("Blackbird"); I stress this as early ground for the consideration of Burnside's ecopoetic and thus posit critical analysis of this in chapter three. While Kant's metaphysics places moral consciousness outside knowledge and into the region of faith, Burnside's lack of moral emphasis in verse -- despite his exemplification of a mind raised by the imperative to awaken into right dwelling -- can be seen to organize knowledge to incorporate this consciousness to a degree. Whether one chooses to read his poetry as an attempt to unify phenomenon and noumena at the point of relation (imaginative and realistic) or not depends upon the approach one brings to Burnside's canon; *what cannot be ignored is the fact that nature, now at a loss to its*

*independence, is increasingly intelligible.* A phenomenological criticism that is sensitive to each individual author and unfolding moment of an oeuvre should begin with an understanding of emphases of consciousness by the writer under examination. I have suggested Stevens for it is he above all other influences that pushes Burnside's contemplation of internal-external dynamics beyond post-Romanticism.

#### II.C. The Interior and the Exterior

The final tercet to the late Stevens poem "Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour" (The Rock, 1954), delivers an idea of light as the concept of God being the supreme fiction created pragmatically by man.

Out of this same light, out of the central mind,  
We make a dwelling in the evening air,  
In which being there together is enough. (16-18)

The end lines take stage as epigraph to ANS, anticipating the quotation from Stevens chosen by Burnside for TAD entry in the Scottish Books Direct Catalogue (2001) in which he tempers the idea that his poetry attempts "revelation" as a support system to the human ("Asylum"). This support is not, however, as Denis Donoghue argues of Stevens when emphasizing the human fiction, "the only way to heal the breach between God, nature, and man". The way, Donoghue reads is:

By becoming God and rearranging things according to your own  
'light'... Hence we say, God and the human and the imagination  
are one. The saint is the man of thought (15).

For Burnside, this light is indicative of what Charles Rycroft (1914-1998) has called the *biological* level of meaning, finding the

rational and spiritual at the paradoxical core of being: "the impersonal force within which is both the core of oneself and yet not oneself" ("Asylum"). For the poet, a concern with textual creation or linguistic fiction is vital but its operation within an animation or agency of all living things (and the memory of the dead) is paramount. This is emphasized over the rearrangements of the 'I'.

Moreover, an engagement with the empirical and verifiable during authentic, heightened selfhood signifies the suprasensible and shows the individual connected within the larger world and its council of relations. This draws from Burnside's theological education and forms the basis of my reading. In Burnside's use of Rycroft, it points to another interpretation of Stevens' late poem where God is not the object of the imagination as in much Stevens criticism, but as suggested in "Adagia" and "A Collect of Philosophy" (Opus), God is understood as the agent of imaginings and the human an inhabitant of this mind (God). It is possible to read this paradigm reflected in Burnside's individual poems that resonate across volumes whose meaning is embodied by the texture of the oeuvre. The human as inhabitant as such, resists both a poetics of negativity in the manner that Bloom suggests in his reading of the preceding line to the tercet, "How high that highest candle lights the dark" (15). For Bloom, this line is an assertion of "less than [it seems] to assert", since it suggests that the poem and muse have become "a dialogue of one" (Climate 359). As Carroll comments, Bloom resists a reading of the poem as the muse speaking through the poet (A New Romanticism 310), something readers are challenged to consider in Burnside's forwarding of the limitations to the phenomenological poetic.

And nothing is more mysterious  
than here:

this morning,  
when we venture from the road

into a realm of shades  
and fairy rings

to claim this negative  
of grass and night,

where rabbits scatter  
from our turning light,

and, somewhere in the grass,  
an insect sings. ("Birth Songs" TLT 1: 14-24)

That penultimate comma is too much: it pressures the reader into the slowly emerging knowledge with an overbearing precision, something too forcefully pushing intuitive poetic reception in time (meter) into an idea (thematic) -- an ironic failure within this ethic. Indicative of the voice urging an imagination of the child-state through nursery imagery and dream-like innocence, we reflect that this is hardly mysterious only made. It is almost salvaged by the purchase of cinematographic lexis in the word 'negative', which offers the reader space to consider the binary of night grass and human light as self-reflexive imposition by the poet, but it has come at a cost: we are asked to "claim" this as the only world we can afford through slow reckoning. In more successful moments where the muse does speak through the poet, as in Steven's final phase of an interior voice in its "obscurity" (Bloom Climate 11), this vision offers a much greater world where the writer is not the arranger but the recipient of the light, which in turn affords a reading of paramour -- a devotional reference to the recipient of love (God, Christ, or Virgin Mary) -- as pre-conceptual: if there is nature in Burnside's poetry (he knowingly admits), it should be operating here. The site that I have defined by extrapolating two poles, which rests within these, is the site of co-creation.

### III. In Conclusion

In his reading of Brigit Pegeen Kelly's poem "Dead Doe" (Song, 1995)



Burnside indicates his own project:

[Her method is] a bringing forth of the process of working through a spiritual problem, a kind of extended meditation that is also a thought experiment, aimed at a more or less provisional -- one might even say 'fuzzy' -- conclusion, reminiscent of dialectic, or that Taoist logical equivalent, where dualism is constantly eliminated by the yin-yang cycle ("Mind The Gap: On Reading American Poetry" 59).<sup>17</sup>

The emphasis is upon bringing forth an ecological process that reflects upon the metaphysical which speaks of a complex unanimity between the structures of the world. Fixing this process to a poetic image within a moment in time is made impossible, for in doing so it "sets up a whole new set of possibilities" that destroys the notion of a static frame. Moreover, in the instance of "Dead Doe", for Burnside, the dead body evokes blind panic in the 'I' of the poem, panic instilled by the fear of a resurrection. His poetry questions the foundation of this fear.

Re-reading the etymology of panic, Burnside notes that it is more than fear or terror: "It is a glimpse into the fabric of the world, a glimpse, after all, of the divine, and it fills its recipient with an inspired awe, a more-than-human vitality" (61). In the current climate of paranoia and ill-defined 'terror' (a sub-theme of GS),<sup>18</sup> Burnside turns to focus upon the security of home via an attention to the natural world, delineating the gap between the public narratives on offer and the possibilities of life. It is in this site that poetry redresses emasculated human responses by refusing to accept the virtual and packaged world by attending to the wild, and awakening a maieutic sense that we are part of the dynamic world of possibility. In Burnside, orthodox religious morality is shunned yet the science of things divine is protected by the typology where

---

<sup>17</sup> Hereafter referred to as "Mind".

<sup>18</sup> See also "The Wonder of Daylight."

religious truth is indirectly examined in relation to the spiritual needs of humanity. This pragmatic idea of bringing the world together while respecting difference and otherness is the address Burnside reads as "living spiritually", being attuned to the earth (Dosa interview 12-13).

One year after the publication of Burnside's first collection, Th, the poet shared ideas about his conceptual framework:

Poetry became for me, without becoming merely personal, a means by which I began to search for and find my home... I have been interested in only a few themes... the idea of holy 'ground', landscape as home... the sense of a 'home self' which provides a base, from which one may travel (Macpherson 12).

In the following chapters I suggest that Burnside draws not only from his contemporary American poets but also directly from the generations preceding them -- most notably the canonical Stevens, Robert Frost, Marianne Moore, and Bishop;<sup>19</sup> these help me map Burnside's early commitment to a "home self" as one that is sustained within his progression to an ecological poetics more than a decade later. As such, his post-Wordsworthian British Romanticism wears the burden and the necessity to escape a post-Transcendentalist Romanticism. This framework impresses a dialogic imagination and heterologous lens upon the writer whose negation of confinement to the page can be identified within Scottish internationalism, the "intellectual DNA" of north European kaleidoscopic syncretism (Crawford Identifying 63), but this is identification not assimilation.

In ecopoetics territorializing or making claims about nature is given

---

<sup>19</sup> Burnside cites Jennifer Atkinson, Mark Doty, Allison Funk, Joy Harjo, Jori Graham, Linda Gregerson, Rodney Jones, Mary Oliver, Eric Pankey, Brigit Pegeen Kelly, Chase Twichell, Charles Wright, and Robert Wrigley as influences and peers ("American Poetry After 1945", "Mind", "Presiding Spirits"; Dosa interview; Funk interview).

over to sensitive naming. This is a central point to the phenomenological imperative. An imperative tentatively located within a meditation upon the subsuming of nature under the laws of understanding, what Emily Dickinson calls the "cost" of perception (#1071), or "circumference" (#1620). In ecopoetics a subordination of reality to the imagination is bypassed for an interest of energy – a Romantic "directiveness" or "eternal moment" (Bristow 171, 183). For Gaston Bachelard, the necessary paradigm for reading this poetic is concrete metaphysics; for Henri Bergson, the conclusion is to focus upon élan vital; and for Heidegger, this force is acknowledged and accessible when we rethink Greek physis: "outside of all specific connotations of mountains, sea, or animals... the pure blooming in the power of which all appears and thus 'is'".<sup>20</sup> Physis, for Heidegger, delineates more than a region of beings, more a totality of beings in which the world is lit up, ("The Turning" The Question Concerning Technology 44). Like an epiphany, this light allows the world to shine on its own terms: the human (subject) and the world (object) released from compartmentalization brokered by an encounter of difference shifting into relationship much like an ecosystem viewed in abstraction, gradually.

The resurrection of the invisible or the absent into forms that are intuited, felt, and present informs the dwelling trilogy and the poetry following TGN; moreover, as in Burnside's latest poems this glimpse is doubled by the view or stance that brings doubt to our place in the world, too. It delivers a sense that we will enter the continuity of the world "as creatures to be transformed into new lives, new forms, in which nothing of the flesh and the dreams that are so tender to us can survive" ("Mind" 63). This double-edge, the

---

<sup>20</sup> Taken from Heidegger's reading of Heraclitus (535–475 BC) in Gesamtausgabe ed. Manfred S. Frings (Frankfurt aM: Klostermann, 1975); cited Haar Song 8.

"internal dialectic" Burnside recalls from the biological continuum within the finite resources of the earth, is also the dialectic of the paradox of change and continuum and the radicalism he conceives in American poetry as a strong counter-current to "cultural totalitarianism" (67).

Throughout Burnside's poetry I find an expression of the ontological alternative to succession as the one and the multiple where life is viewed less in transition and more as *becoming* that *endures* (Deleuze Bergsonism 37). Ralph Waldo Emerson speaks of the rotation of thought and the resources it draws upon (lines of philosophy and literature) reconstituted into new forms as *union*. Emerson uses the image of shells on a beach as temporary white colony to evoke ideas of settlement and to evoke the idea of non-opposition between material and ideal. The symbolic metaphor posits that human technologies are elements, too, "forever renewed to be forever destroyed" ("The Transcendentalist", 1841, Collected 1: 216). Burnside is interested in Emerson's "fuller union with the surrounding system" and he gives this Bergsonian inflection, especially through dreams and recollections (later stressed as the phenomenological transforming into the writerly) and how these impress upon our momentary encounters.<sup>21</sup> His vehicle is the gathering of a tradition that is composed not only of an attention to the empirical natural world but one that appropriates the redress of radical poetics based on the contemplation of the infinite and of the nothingness that comes to being. By this I mean both the existential position that finds earth as resource from which we emerge and to which we return, and the metaphysical sense that being depends on nothingness or absence, a pocket in the world and in consciousness from which and in which Being and becoming are visible.

---

<sup>21</sup> The direct engagement: John Burnside, "Homage To Henri Bergson" The Red Wheelbarrow 10 (2004).

## 1. Framework

This chapter correlates ecocriticism and Romanticism as a means to highlight the phenomenological aspect of Burnside's verse and the poetics of the hinterland. I present language issues that arise from subject-object versus inter-subjectivity debates as being surpassed by a Romantic ecology resident in Burnside's full speech -- or the poetics of ecological consciousness. I develop this from an inquiry into the critical potential hidden within Bate's conception of 'post-phenomenologically inflected high romantic poetics'.

### I. Ecopoetics and the Romantic Heritage

The politics of nature in the British tradition resistant to capitalist modernity preceding Bate's research extends from the double-fronted critique by John Ruskin and William Morris upon industrialization and its spiritual impoverishment, to the post-utopian view of Raymond Williams.<sup>22</sup> Bate's reading of the ecopoetic as "a post-phenomenological inflection of high Romantic poetics" (Song 262) is a crucial statement for my reading of Burnside and is pressured by Rigby's reading of Romanticism. Reading Bate's restoration of the centrality of nature to Romanticism, may extend post-structuralism. A critical position marked clearly to negate misprisons of transcendental imagination and non-correspondence

---

<sup>22</sup> Bate aligns his theory of Romantic ecology in Song to F.R. Leavis by citing Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness, 1933, by Leavis and Denys Thompson. This position was first outlined in "Culture and Environment: From Austen to Hardy," "Culture and Environmentalism," Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) Symposium, Bath Spa University College, 3 July 1998, subsequently published in New Literary History, 30.3 (1999): 541-560. Reading the tension between industrialization and agriculture alongside identification with republicanism in the pastoral, Coupe argues, aligns Bate to Leavis more than to Williams, for the latter's dismissal of a nostalgic, organic community ("Bate" 15). I argue that Bate's instinctive "mechanism of admonition" (Bate "Culture" 558) negates atavism and follows Williams' construction of new consciousness. Moreover, Bate's reading of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Leavis, and Thompson transforms social Darwinism into a thesis on the transport between nature and civility, which for Rigby, resists politics of nostalgia and offers a "pre-political" New Historicism ("Song" 396). Coupe reads Leavis' poetics and his notion of "enactment" and "embodiment" stated in Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry, 1936, and The Living Principle, 1975, as prefigurements of ecocritical appropriations of phenomenology.

between text and world is, however, to insist upon representation of the self-with-other and a challenge to the understanding of self as the sole narrator of history. It is thus that I read significant gravity in the application of the theories of negative poetics (Bate, Rigby). Furthermore, this particular contemporary aesthetic can be read as post-modern in the sense that the politics of autonomy and identity as self-representation (internal authority over external) in modernity have been superseded (or extended) into the acknowledgement of the limits of the self (humanism, anthropocentrism). I review ecocriticism's position on these issues here before moving onto ideas of presencing: I indicate to the reader that these are explicated separately in my criticism yet are coupled in Burnside's post-Romanticism. In this chapter they help me move into debates in language theory through the terms of apartness and techne (sec. I.B.), which provides a platform for reading home and the 'I' in contemporary poetics (sec. II.).

Charlene Spretnak argues that the paradigm of post-structuralism looks decidedly similar to a model of ecology; she claims common abstracted ideological concepts of "soft boundaries, diversity, adaptability, novelty - and inter-relatedness" (222). Fundamentally, for Spretnak, the fact that our existence is dependent upon a reality outside of our consciousness (air, water, earth), restates Bate's polemic that the post-structuralist referential fallacy is to be held to account (Romantic 56, "Out of the Twilight" 26). While the consideration of how the social construction of nature and the primacy of the represented in late twentieth-century humanities failed to consider the relation between culture and nature to the conclusion that cultural mediation does not eradicate material existence, another metanarrative is being proposed: a structural paradox of the necessary transcendent holism i.e. that all forms of

life relate to the global biosphere interdependently. Thus a decentred politics that recalls from a structurally constituted subject to develop the non-priority of a privileged consciousness (as with ecology), affords an epistemology borne from an acceptance of finitude and conditions of experience outside of self-grounding. One can read Burnside's 'I' of the individual poem operating within this constructed paradigm.

Gregory Bateson clarified the "epistemological fallacy" in post-Enlightenment Occidental thought as the incorrect choice of the unit of survival in the bio-taxonomy. To Bateson, contemporary ecological science dismisses "either the family line or the species or subspecies" as, "quite obvious[ly] not the unit of survival in the real biological world ("Pathologies of Epistemology" 1969) (491). The epistemic turn of the 1830s towards the cell from the organism, and the Darwinian notion of evolution at the genetic level have now been superseded by biological research into evolution within the ecosystem. This new science learns that the correct unit of survival, "organism plus environment", readdresses the epistemological error, includes interaction within the unit, and offers a new series of units or differences: "gene-in-organism, organism-in-environment, eco-system etc." where to destroy one's environment is to destroy one's self.

The Darwinian population model and biological genetic model, superseded by Richard Dawkins' genotype plus environment (The Extended Phenotype: The Long Reach of the Gene, 1982), is modified in Ingold's fusion of biology and anthropology, which "locates the organism or person as a *creative agent* within a total *field of relations* whose transformations describe a *process of evolution*" ("Anthropologist" 208, my emphasis). The synthesis of sciences of mind and nature in Bateson, Ingold, and Shepard, suggest different degrees of socio-biology deriving from E.O. Wilson and the notion of

a creative advance into novelty in A.N. Whitehead yet all emphasize the organism as the embodiment of a life process within a holistic topological field. Moreover, this new vision that emphasizes development, implication, and possibility (epigenesis) over evolutionist theories of causation and genesis, promotes ecology as the survival of ideas, programs, and units as "complexes of differences [within] circuits" (Bateson 491). These "circuits" or webs of interdependence underwrite all things that exist differentially in the universe. As a topology of difference and otherness, the literary ecological abstraction conceived as the holistic originary site of differentiation sustains the philosophical questioning of essence, determinism, immediacy, and experience. As a materialist suggestion of a complex harmony from diversity (Bate Song 229), it is a non-transcendent paradigm of the immanent world. Burnside works from this position when he outlines the provisional as freedom to realize self, the liberation from permanence. Burnside's poetry resonates in such a topological field, a science of place, which stresses the 'creative agent' by drawing from American ideas of co-creation in response to the problematic of the non-anthropocentric phenomenological lyrical 'I'.

In Romanticist verse, this site or fabric was conceived as part of an active principle that commingles humanity and nature, a force or vitalism deeply interfused and connective. Pantheistic-holism is remodelled in post-Romanticism by the collective, auto-producing self, which is at once different from others yet inextricably compounded within a connected, determining matrix. Bateson offers the rethinking of logic, system, and order within the untamed genesis of evolutionary becoming, which relinquishes the need to think beyond the concept if the concept is complex and open. I read this emphasis in Bate's stress on the post-phenomenological and Burnside's imperative to locate the 'I' not the mind alone. Bateson discusses



the fallacy as an epoch subsequent to totemism (empathy with nature driving social organization) and then animism (extension of human mind into nature), as the third phase, "separation": from the structure within which mind is immanent, which leads to faith in the transcendental (492-3). Thus, the "eco-mental" system supported by Shepard's thesis looks at this separation and argues that the evolutionary unit of survival equates identically with mind (Bateson 491). *It is how we think that determines our survival opportunities.* Disputes as to whether this mind should be conceived as a part of the world or apart from the world continue to disclose themselves as my reading of post-Romanticism outlines.

#### I.A. Ecopoetic Presencing in Romantic Context

William Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" (1798) dramatizes the poet's thoughts on memory and the extended contemplation of being within time. This poem argues, "we see into the life of things" (49) only with "an eye made quiet" (47). This idea works beyond Wordsworth's Miltonic allusions to blind mechanistic functioning and his extension of this toward a corporeal and self-regulated world, for its analysis of time develops his reflection upon physics and causality to incorporate the interrelations of the human and world conditions. Dynamics of change and continuum in allusion to Wordsworth's own great theme of advancement from childhood to maturity, and the effects of the French Revolution on a personal, specifically micro-scale during the preceding five years to the poem's composition, are represented simultaneously in the image of the "setting suns, / and the round ocean" (97-98) as the dwelling place "of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime / of something far more deeply interfused" (95-96). Wordsworth proposes that an acknowledgment of the diurnal patterns as

the larger order of sustainable and evolutionary growth enables the eye -- once equivalent to the 'I' -- to lose its egotistical preoccupations, instrumental gaze, and inauthentic grounding: a form of non-anthropocentric minding. The tension between subjective experience and non-identity that resists subjective sensation as witnessed here is underlined by Theodore Adorno's idea that there remains a promise to be read in nature: the "not yet" as the "indeterminate" quality of the world. This is restated in Adorno, as the deliberation of the beautiful in art that could be viewed as latency (Aesthetic 107). Prior to this and within a different lexis, Heidegger speaks of the "no longer [of God being] in itself the not-yet veiled arrival of its inexhaustible nature" ("The Thing", 1950, Poetry 194). Ecopoetics anticipates this by enabling futurity or promise as a form of differentiation and deferral that requires a temporal logic or radical anteriority that is other than the unified medium of time; it can be seen as an extra step (after existence) away from essence to presencing (especially acute in SIF). This, however, is not assertion, but what Heidegger reads as an already renounced claim, "namely... to a binding doctrine and valid cultural achievement or a deed of the spirit" (Poetry 185). I visit this at the very end of my thesis in terms of freedom within history.

Wordsworth's "something" evokes the intangible "motion and spirit, that impels / All thinking things" ("Lines" 100-101) even during this heightened awareness. It promotes the idea that the point of relation (human to world) is one where uncertainty and inaccessibility surmount knowledge. This impasse is written within a poem concerned with being at home and being with others during the poet's struggle to resist subordinating the natural world to human instrumentalism. It is the Romantic statement that our point of relationship with the larger world and the "life of things" is one where we must accept uncertainty, decline control, and offer

ourselves to the gap between things where "an eye made quiet" can rest and experience a connection to the more-than-human during time when the world speaks for itself, arising from the shadows of human history. This version of the impasse as a statement not upon the limitations of poetry but on the relinquishing of human assertion is vital to an understanding of Burnside's ecopoetics. Furthermore, a valuable analogue for this understanding exists between, on one hand, Romantic studies underwritten by ideas of nostalgia and inheritance (and the necessity to break from these to enable the full potential of human and earth in post-Romantic verse), and on the other, in ecocriticism's distrust for anthropocentric creations and reactionary positions, which either wish to reach back to a modality of being before the reduction of things to objects and resources, or recreate the split between human and world via an emphasis on inherently constructed natures. I read the tension between the components of the analogue as follows: one wishes to disinter any narrative regarding the metaphysical, while the other -- although founded in historical materialist discourse -- can afford space within this inquiry for an idea of nature as invisible, unfathomable, and operative outside of (existing hegemonic) human material narratives. By extension, the ecological fabric and evolutionary processes alongside the interdependency of ecosystems across the global biosphere read as one borderless totality compounded by division and fragmentation, motions thus towards the current classification of the metaphysical. Through readings of Burnside I critique this necessarily evoking transcendental spirit.

Bloom argues that British and American poetry since John Milton is "displaced Protestantism" (Anxiety 152), in the case of English Romanticism "a Protestantism astonishingly transformed by different kinds of humanism or naturalism" (Visionary xvii). This Calvinistic humanizing of the world -- Bloom's conception of the Miltonic

Romantic contrasted to the classical, Catholic, and conservative discourse -- begins to draw forth. With this in mind we can reconsider how biblical hermeneutics once accommodated literal, allegorical, figural, and typological reading practices until post-Reformation systematic theology placed primacy upon the literal. This presents what is now an orthodox Protestant view upon the inner light of the individual's soul negating the requirement for an intermediary while delivering spiritual autonomy, which I argue finds a new extension -- or a critique of summaries of this kind as unmindful over-simplifications -- in the ecological-metaphysical configured by Burnside. While McGann reads an element of Protestantism in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's notion that unity between human and divine is achieved via self-consciousness and internalized contemplation rather than a unity derived from immediate encounters with the presence of the spiritual (45), Burnside encounters the empirical-metaphysical without threat to spiritual being.<sup>23</sup>

The growth of dissent and civil freedom based on the understanding of civilization as a human institution that Bloom is drawing from suggests that the imagination displaces externalised antinomian sentiments in Romanticism. As we will see later, for de Man, the poem of imagination is read as aporia, an impasse before the worldly. The deManian uncertainty of reading signs can be read as a misprision of John Keats' negative capability or as a celebrated antidote to Calvinist desire, in turn offering twenty-first century ethics the notion that we need not judge that which we cannot understand. Burnside's naturalistic humanism proposes that the earth is enough if

---

<sup>23</sup> As counter to the context here, the meeting point of philosophy of mind and sociology of knowledge delineates the relationship between orality, literacy, and biology; as examined in Greek intellectual history by Eric A. Havelock. See also Harold A. Innis, Marshall McLuhan, Walter J. Ong, and Edmund Snow Carpenter.

man realizes his (material) spirit, freedom, and the possibilities of his condition. As Martyn Crucefix identified, Burnside repeats the secular miracle of Rainer Maria Rilke, "Heirsein ist herrlich" ("just being here is glorious") (34); true, but it is probably gathered from Wallace Stevens' position in "The Rock" (The Rock) that "in the predicate that there is nothing else" (143), which operates with two levels of emphasis upon 'that': the indicative mood urging empirical consciousness, and the meta-predicate that describes the property of the predicate as the force that brings objects alive and in use, relinquishing the idea of the other worldly. I have stressed this to indicate the resultant effects of Burnside's negative poetics.

By contrast, Rigby's Romantic poetics of place is defined by the unhomely encounter of the other fuelled by longing (Topographies 88-89), echoed in the disjunction between experience and record, embodied life and poem: "the non-correspondence of the written text and its earthly referent" (91). The use-value of an emphasis upon the reductive or contractive force of the finite particulars of language, as illustrated by specific readings of Romantic poetry, cannot be fully projected onto artworks of the present day especially those that deploy "the way", "something", and "nothing" as denotive terms. Rigby's unpacking of the German background to Bate's criticism provides ecocriticism with a highly insightful and invaluable reading of European Romanticism as a qualification to the transcendence of human imagination over the non-human, material, external nature, which Rigby characterizes as an "epistemological modesty" aligned to the "unsayable" nature of the world (163). Furthermore, I argue that the non-modal forms of language capitalize an expressive power distinct from inert prose, "that which cannot be characterized by an objective predicate" (Bowie Schelling 54) or that which is the music and manner of the world; and while this may be

unsayable to a degree it can be projected as something more positive than an impasse. This is where Burnside's poetics operate, counterpoint to the Romantic conventions that will be identified forthwith. The extensive analysis in the following sections emphasizes how crucial Rigby's pressure on Bate is to my thesis; by implication, I read further into Bate's ecopoetic than the use of language opened by Rigby; thus the following is theoretical ground for my reading of Burnside's poetry.

### I.B. Topographies of the Pre-Conditional

Rigby prefers a post-modern inter-subjectivity, for her reading of the subject in the modern era is one contaminated by its domination of the object world. Furthermore, for Rigby, "the inexpressibility of Earthly presence" (Haar Song 124) affords her ground for a world that exists beyond the (human) text and thus by extension, beyond textually constructed subjectivity. Rigby's negative poetics forwards naming as obliterating the singularity of things rather than disclosing Being, choosing to read a model of language as a tool rather than an event we encounter (Rigby "Song" 396). Language as the event we encounter is Burnside's self-reflexive point in arresting and stilling the phenomenological imperative as I have shown.<sup>24</sup> Rigby turns to Yves Bonnefoy in order to realize a crucial element of textuality: "the perpetual falling short [of the poetic world]", namely, "the way in which it both draws us in and sends us forth, urging us to 'interrupt' our reading by returning our gaze to the world beyond the page" (Topographies 12, 16; "Utopian"; Topographies 125-6).<sup>25</sup> With respect to the self-deconstructing text,

---

<sup>24</sup> This can be seen as the slowing down of poetics via the meta-epoché of his epiphanies (examples in later chapters).

<sup>25</sup> Yves Bonnefoy, "Lifting Our Eyes From the Page," *Critical Inquiry*, 16 (1990): 794-806.

Rigby does not accept language as ground of existence even if this provides for the emergence of world as (textually) infinite. I find that Rigby reads against Heidegger, as I shall show, and thus has limited application to Burnside.

In his reading of Rilke's "open" as pure perception, Haar (using Bonnefoy) contests that sense is not the priority of the poetic. Haar's position upon the limitation of the subject is set to emphasize remoteness rather than proximity between self and world where intimacy is displaced by opacity -- a rhetoric resonating with terms of exile (Song 139). Haar finds Heidegger's pressurizing of Rilke's open perception into the sense of metaphysical subjectivity and interiority, fallible. The distinction between human and animal as shown in the eighth Duino elegy (1912-1922) is one of "shelter" and "rupture": the former provided to the animals for their primacy to be open to nature; the latter for humans as a causal condition derived by going beyond this natural ground (Song 122). For Heidegger, the nature of the animal and the primal ground of the human are identical (Poetry 100-101). A singularity is forwarded despite the oppositional approaches to the same. For Haar, there exists only an analogy between two different relationships. Haar's emphasis on man's reflection as a form of objectification exposes the calculating interiority which rejoins him to earth. This interiority or primacy of the 'I' is undermined by the effacement of the poem, the "invisible" aspect of the earth (Song 123), which in Rigby and Haar motions the world as unsayable while collapsing interior and exterior world to the point that the subject is relativized and involved in the world. I read this as an emphasis of mind and world meeting, and human epistemology in Burnside. This, to Haar, shows the world or heart that the human neither inhabits nor possesses forwarding only presentiment and will, not fusion or ownership. I return to this debate by example of TLT in chapter five.

Reading across Heidegger to fully understand his analysis here, one recalls that the subject has to open up to a path which is delivered by understanding (Being 148, 201). As with the model of affective disposition (stimmung) that is an anchoring of Dasein finding itself in place but not master of itself, thrownness (geworfenheit) is a structure that transcends each particular entity/body. As two terms which relate to a third, befindlichkeit, the notion of already-being-found-in-place, they show how the world in which the body is involved has no "raw state" (Haar Song 57) but is always within relations. This facticity, echoed in Ingold (Perception 244-250) and James (Principles 219-278), is understood when being is open to reception; it is not fitting sensations to categories that lead to judgment (Kant). This distinction sustains an analogy itself to the way of the world and an epiphanic correlation to or meeting of this way, not a *fitting* derived from subjective or bodily intention but one *arriving in concert* with the emanation from/of things:

The feel of the maze  
 when I sleep in the afternoon  
 then wake a moment  
 in the house we left ("Flitting" FD 1-4)

The two feet of the opening line stretched by vowels is continued in the half-rhyme in 'sleep' but ransacked by the over-elaborate syllabics of 'afternoon' opening into the semantics of the monosyllabic eye of 'wake' in turn slipping into an idea of loss and times past. This is one of many examples where the relationship does not begin with body for mind delivers this comportment, but it is a strained evocative that must entangle itself within its own problematic of reconnaissance. However, this self-reflexion neither asserts the primacy of the 'I' as the sole agent of meaning nor asserts that all truth requires representation. It attempts to



forward responsibility and care through *involvement*; in this poem it is emphasized through its absence or estrangement. Haar understands this involvement noting that all is not relative to the 'I' alone, for it is relative to world, firstly (37). In Heidegger, as with Rigby's and Haar's Rilke, self-possession is questioned while a deep and anonymous immense life is forwarded: the distinction is that one retains agency of the 'I' (Heidegger) while the other asserts (or requires) defacement of the 'I' (Rigby) -- Burnside lies in-between them. A further qualification between understanding via stimmung and acknowledgement derived from physis is made below; this acts as a means to locate Burnside's stance within an ecopoetic tradition which can better articulate its learning from continental philosophy.

#### I.B.1. Apartness and Techne

Theorizing the epistemological and ethical implications of the precedence of nature to culture is the challenge laid open in the ecocritical turn. Ecocentricisms attempt to work beyond humanism; they lead "in the direction of a deeper immanence, or perhaps of a certain transcendence" (Rigby "Poets" 4) it is claimed. Whether these are distinct projects or not is something Rigby's analysis does not measure, but offers them as paths leading to "acceptance... of our corporeality... [and] interconnectedness [with our] earth others [Plumwood "Ecosocial"]". For Rigby, this is enabled by physis: a force prior to human making, which when coupled to a land ethic renders human technologies compatible with the life of earth. Does this address and its intellectual domain historically formulated as a discourse upon the relationship between immanence and transcendence offer the right context to initiate an analysis of contemporary poetry? A movement towards an answer lies within an analysis of the concept of the Heimat where the notion of exile is brought to the

fore.

Extending Bate's discussion of rootlessness in his articulation of the (ecopoetic) high Romantic drawn from an understanding beyond Friedrich Hölderlin to Rilke (Song 262-266), Rigby emphasizes "ecstatic dwelling" not as homelessness but "dislocation, dispossession, and desecration" (Topographies 90). This concept signifies neither blood nor inheritance but responsibility and care for a place (whether one is native or not):

It becomes apparent that some form of exile, or in Deleuzean parlance, deterritorialisation, is intrinsic to dwelling. We must first encounter the absence or strangeness of a place before we can begin to attune ourselves to it in dwelling ("What Are Poets For?" 11).

We learn that the precondition to (modern) dwelling is exile (Haar Song 139-140). Rigby's published version of this paper ("(Im)possibility") deletes the reference to Gilles Deleuze. However, it is of value to read the original text signalling a theory of history as a process where control or order of land can be undone while additionally signifying a vector of weakened ties (or loosened points of relation) between culture and nature, people and place. Crucial ethics are delineated here.

To insert this view on dwelling within an argument of the precondition of exile requires further thought on Deleuze's metaphysics where the deterritorialized is that which has not been subsumed by law and can thus enable desire to flow freely as a separate economy to that of power. I remind the reader of my extrapolation upon the thesis epigraph (above). To read deterritorialization not solely in its relative sense but accompanied by reterritorialization (signifying both historical cycles and conjunction with its absolute) would lead to the construction of two elements. Firstly, (positive) "immanence" -- to exist or remain within the land (Deleuze Anti-

Oedipus 176, 251, 257, 315; Philosophy 88), and secondly, to the notion of (negative) "subjectivation" -- a process preceding the constitution of the subject. With consonance to ecology and an emphasis on life, this unlike a theory of determinate essence allows for the self to be read as an effect of the world, "one and the same essential reality, the producer-product" (Anti-Oedipus 5; Plateaus 85) -- something not alien to Ingoldian perception and Emersonian co-creation. My thesis affords only a small space to clarify this here and in the following chapter, for Burnside's vision of power within dispossessory ethics leads this outside philosophy and into pragmatic relations, which my thesis extrapolates in more depth.

Deleuze's notion of desire as "collective exile" (Anti-Oedipus 377) is important in its ecologically sound notion of remaining within relationships: a vision of oneness made via the process of adsorption, which adheres to material contact (rather than absorption, which is assimilation as incorporation); I read this version of desire as one that promotes contingency over necessity and thus chimes with Burnside. Deleuze explicitly recalls Fichte and Romantic notions of progress and purposiveness (Immanence 27) while offering a delineation of the concept of immanence as a non-dualist collapse of distinctions into plural monism or univocal envelopment of life. The abstract and conceptual view on the openness of being embedded within networks of relations develops pantheism into a conceptual site where the (Cabbalistic) contraction of the infinite foregrounds events and process as forces against inscribed relations; this could lead us full-circle to Bloom. However, the influence of Bateson can be read within the notion of the nature of mankind in the universe expressed in post-structuralist terms: as a spirit realizing itself in the rhizomatic non-arborescence of the plane of immanence, which allows for difference within the one mechanosphere of life conceived as an evolutionary a-centred connective, machinic network

of intra-assemblage and inter-being (Plateaus 556-58). I have spoken of this as the paradox of the ecological-metaphysical metanarrative; i.e. the haunting fabric of doubleness which backlights Burnside's conceptualized self and soul, above.

Thus, Rigby's notion of exile as precondition to the experience of dwelling is one that notes the historical formation of societies, their finite nature, and their dependence upon the land that constitutes immanent identity -- as such it is an empirical ecological Deleuzianism. Moreover, it affords the poetic de-realization of things into singularities the philosophical gravity of seeing the world for the first time within new contexts. As such it reads equivalence between the precondition of the earth for human life and the precondition of exile for human settlement, which in turn outlines the need for the world to be rediscovered rather than inherited; a model of thought where learning and reinhabitation displace notions of (pre)determinism and inheritance: a model of life over history (an idea Burnside returns to in TLT). It thus provides an exciting counter statement to misprisioned Heideggerian politics of soil in addition to resonating with the deconstruction of grammatical models of origin and institutions of power. While Deleuze and Guattari offer a reformulation of desire as first order rather than second order (looking for products of desire rather than projections of desire, needs derived by desire rather than desire derived from needs Anti-Oedipus), I am offering only a parallel with Rigby's first order of exile rather than suggesting that these writers share one metaphysic. As such, my engagement with Deleuze and his revisions to psychoanalysis terminates. However, as rearticulation of "at homeness - upon the earth" understood through experience of "being lost in the world" (Bate Song 260), it is such an important position that this thesis must examine how this is rendered and used.

From this position, Rigby asserts her role for poets, "not so much to draw things into being through *their* song, but rather to draw us forth into the song of the others" (Rigby "Poets" 12, original emphasis). This may involve the joining of human voices to land to compose works that have a dense site of intertextual references and semantic webs that "might be seen to mimic the complex interrelationships characterizing natural systems" (13). This delineation of a poetic space sounds viable and ethical. I believe it does not necessarily extend into a legitimate base for Rigby's negative poetics as the only way out of human technologies. I reach an ontological dead end with negative poetic theory where a reading of silence or poetic relinquishment equates to Wittgensteinian silence. I find silence and non-meaning communicating significance. Whereas Bate asserts that poetry can bring forward the essence of exile and dwelling not just "in their linguistic particulars" (Bate Song 260), Rigby argues that linguistics are restricted by decoupling from a primordial temporality; "absence" and "strangeness" (Rigby "Poets"), therefore, become disconnection and non-relation. Burnside envisions these within his poetics of reconnection:

It flowered earlier this year,  
 the meadowsweet,  
 lining the ditches along the Kinaldy road  
 with the dark and implacable perfume  
 of mourning; ("Homage to Henri Bergson" 2: 1-5)

In Bergsonian terminology connections and life are leaping flames in the spectrum of becoming; to Burnside this is indicated not by presence of objects but something "far out in the streaming fields of grass / where something - bird, not bird - / began to sing" (16-18), a time passed yet vibrating like the peal of a bell soaking the air. I do not overstate that Burnside's mourning resonates with Heidegger's meaning of "apartness" as the beginning of home rather

than its decay (Language 194). It carries the sense of mourning that the perception of world and the divine within begins with acknowledgement that they are concealed by the logos (Poetry 223) but that we are impelled to uncover it and sing it into existence:

the dark and implacable perfume  
of mourning;  
                    not

the mourning that comes of death,  
or a needless loss,  
but how the earth cries out to us  
the stark reminder of a life to come (2: 4-10)

This is a reworking of Wordsworthian space that is "both an image of nature's time rising out of the mists of antiquity and of the remembered past of human time" (Salvasen 156-57; cited Tuan 126). Now this topography is delivered by the poet's inquiry into memory and perception encouraging attunement to the dynamics between mind and the given and the sense of loss -- the disposition underlined by an ecological crisis and mismanaged politics of separation. The poetic study of the exchanges between physical ecology and mental ecology installs a three-fold dimension into time: the past as the soul's memory, the future its anticipation, the present its attentiveness. Memory offers more than the instantaneous; it allows Burnside to consider consciousness in relation to the universe and by which its distinctions are artificial. The pull is to "be re-entered in the holy book" (Burnside "Homage to Henri Bergson" 4: 7), suggesting virtual co-existence, duration, and a move to the conditions of experience rather than the sacred. It is implicit thematically in Burnside's poetry and is mirrored by a phenomenological poetic that is without stress; sometimes this is not left in isolation but is ironically presented as being "haunted by nothing, not even the thought of a haunting" (5: 18-19). This ontological alternative to succession is the sustainable 'one' and

the 'multiple' where life is viewed less in transition and more as *becoming* that *endures* (Deleuze Bergsonism 37).

#### I.B.1.a. German Romanticism and Aesthetic Theory

Rigby's thesis concerning the failure of Romantic poetics -- the effacement within presencing written in the Romantic quest for the ineffable as that which slips human frameworks -- uses Hegelian aesthetic theory. In his lectures Hegel recognized that "the beauty of art is one of the means which dissolve and reduce to unity the... opposition and contradiction between the abstractly self-concealed spirit and nature -- both the nature of external phenomena and that of inner subjective feeling and emotion" (Hegel 56). The content of art, a principle of oneness, is read by its association with the Idea, which for Hegel, is the absolute (transcendent) God/Spirit made manifest in man's actions.

Hegel asserts that Romantic art fails to live up to the aesthetic ideal because its spiritual content outstrips its material means and thus always indicates something beyond itself that art cannot attain (Hegel 427-38; Rigby, Topographies 112). Rigby follows Hegel and Bowie (Schelling, Aesthetics) in outlining the development in German Romanticism from Friedrich von Schiller to Friedrich von Schlegel and on into Schelling. Hegel's conception of unity aims at overcoming Kant's intuitive understanding as subjective not absolute -- the particular determined from within written as purposiveness (zweckmässigkeit). Hegel's idea that the principle of art is the unity that achieves absolute standpoint is indebted to Schiller. It is a principle most especially formulated in Schelling's philosophy of art within his System of Transcendental Idealism. However, In Schiller, Rigby reads a post-modern aesthetic that would accomplish "the realization of the ideal" (Topographies 99) in its sublation of

the naïve and sentimental and its production of the divine, in effect realizing that which nature by itself cannot do. This could provide common ground for Bate and Heidegger to articulate nature's dependency upon man; however, it is Rigby's emphasis on Schelling as an important historical case for ecocriticism that will act as my temporary focal point.

The Romantic is both anti-systematic and oriented critically toward the limits of knowledge. As a form of self-limitation, the Frühromantik developed non-foundational systems that respected rationality but retained a gap between theoretical knowledge and truth. The avant-garde of Jena and the rise of the journal Athenaeum (1798-1800) extended Fichte's pioneering concept of the world as negative projection -- the 'not I' -- by incorporating an animated force into this other: the "autopoiesis of earth" (Rigby Topographies 102-3). I argue that this model of a gap recalls Kant's positioning of an ethical stance (above) and is stated in the writings of Emerson, which serves as the basis for an American interpretation of Idealism and as the representation of the natural offered in a non-deterministic model of possibility and openness that cannot be subjected to schematic mapping. It is a legacy Burnside explicitly draws from as he models subjectivity and finds the ecophenomenological limited by not being able to extend to the 'not I' that erases the 'I':

we turn to the nearly blue  
 of night on the glass,  
 or stand out in the garden looking up  
 at circles of counted stars  
 and feel ourselves a little strange again,  
 neutrals in the mystery of presence. ("Winter Holidays" FD 14-19)

It is the challenge to think of what one sees away from home and security but within other patterns that repeat themselves in their



own way. 'Blue' is the Stevensian symbol of the imagination, an anti-symbol offering the vacuous represented in only sky: a site where we posit boundary, horizon and configurations of world. It is what makes us 'strange', but how is this 'neutral' in anyway other than not being able to underwrite, configure, or make full sense or harness the presence, which only works to make distinction between human and world?

For Rigby, Schelling's vision of art as expressed in "Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature" (1807) represents an attempt to restore connections to the divine via methods beyond the artist's intentionality. Moving close to my position, this aesthetic is evaluated as enabling a continuity of mind and nature with the recognition of the limits of knowledge, in turn eluding human reductionism. Here, Rigby reads Heidegger's theory of the clearing (Poetry) exactly; it offers the bringing of Being to things not through their dependency upon man but more in the possibility of art. However, the emphasis on the incommunicable and the contraction of world to word in Rigby's reading of Hölderlin's exegesis of the poetics of earth draws to a position of the world as "ultimately unknowable" and also "properly unspeakable" (Topographies 122) -- a statement that dovetails with an under-reading of deManian deconstructionist theory and misreads the concept of the speaking of language. This is central to philosophies of human agency and crucial to our understanding of Burnside's ecopoetic.

For Burnside, nature resonates with and alludes to the metaphysical but will not distil to singularity other than within a concrete and rational concept, that of ecology, as thus it is speakable and fathomable to a greater degree than in high Romanticism. The epochal destiny of absent ground, the crumbling of metaphysics and of earth, the anxiety derived from the dispossession of the transcendental, and the desire for roots or indigence over an

attention to self-destruction are key counters that inform the theoretical texts that this thesis draws from and that I am outlining here with echoes in Burnside's poetry. This ecological foundation, moreover, develops German Idealism as interpreted in America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries into a modality that could be called 'non-willing perspectivism'. It is the reduced ego, diluted anthropocentrism, and a lack of determinism; what Heidegger terms gelassenheit: a profound humility in which the gift of being is meditative and the call of language enables the thing to show itself.

Although a language system of signs may be read as analogous to a natural system, its grammar, Rigby argues, "cannot be assumed to replicate the pattern of differences and connections prevailing among things-in-themselves" (Topographies 123). This negative stance extends into the reading of various texts: the sublime's "inexpressibility" (156, 202); the "incommunicable" vastness in Johann Wolfgang Goethe (172); the failure of disclosure in Wordsworth (180, 252); the failure to strive to contain nature in Hölderlin (190); the forces "beyond [Coleridge's mariner's] knowledge and control" (208); and the limits of human ordering and control in Clare (237). While Rigby admits that her thesis is honestly "inconclusive" as to whether negative poetics of Romanticism should be extended or left behind as tools to read contemporary poetry (219), her determination is to resist the "effacement of otherness" (260) as a means to sharing the ambivalent, strange, and irreducible natural world. This is to embrace the Romantic resistance to severing nature from science and matter from spirit within a redemptive ethos (261). As such, it negotiates a critique outlining the use of negative poetics as a means of sustaining the (German) elevation of the ideal over the real.

Schelling's influence on Emerson is the most profound of all Idealist thinkers upon Transcendentalists. The idea of the Absolute

as the union of the ideal and the real, the world-soul and nature as the work of God, have strong parallels in Emerson's contemporary (Welleck 51, 54). My contention is that Heideggerian poiesis, which requires redemption to enhance relations, does not replicate this dimension and posit the other as remote (Rigby) but that it enters into this dimension, which is really Schelling's point, too, in his exegesis of subjectivity as both grounded in nature and as its expression.<sup>26</sup> Thus my post-Emersonian reading of the American tradition in chapter two offers a way into Burnside's poetry as with my clarification of the Romantic hinterland of the ecopoetic articulated by Bate.

#### I.B.2. Clarification of the Impossible

Rigby's challenge to Bate's pro-Heideggerian poetics is centred upon its elevation of human speaking above all other voices or elements of the earth's song. This perspective upon hubris and non-correspondence is derived from a negative reading of impossibility, a reading of poetics of Being rather than poetics of becoming, and an insistent negation of Heidegger's symbiotic co-dependency. I see this missing two terms that would advance a purchase on Burnside's poetics.

Naming, for Rigby, is the obliteration of singularities as a method of enframing; it is not a form of disclosure. Hart's appropriation of negative poetics attempts to negate de Man's position, i.e. to extract theology from literary study due to its

---

<sup>26</sup> Also René Welleck, "The Minor Transcendentalists and German Philosophy," New England Quarterly, 15.4 (1942): 652-680, and Confrontations: Studies in the Intellectual and Literary Relations between Germany, England and the United States during the Nineteenth Century (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1965); also Stanley M. Vogel German Literary Influences on American Transcendentalists, (New Haven: Yale UP, 1955), and pt. 2 Richard Berkeley, Coleridge and the Crisis of Reason, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007).

incompatibility with reading (Moynihan 586). Hart misreads de Man twice. Firstly, by suggesting that theology is too determinate a referent for deconstruction Hart overplays de Man's interest in that which lies "in-between", resisting polarization of the political and aesthetic (593-94) -- that which is most succinctly deposited in de Man's reading of the figure of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Secondly, mapping the deManian negative into theology to offer a counter argument to a philosophy of a positive descendental and empirically manifest spirit that enlightens, is to binarize faith and doubt, and to model de Man's thinking into a site veiled by the darkness of unknowing where one approaches God as a de-regulated spirit beyond representation (Hart 286).

This dichotomy is bad ground for the author of Topographies as it over-determines the thesis on negative poetics. For de Man, poetry operates in a realm of transcendence that marks "the sign of the failure of the intention toward the eternal" (de Graef Serenity 87). The poet of *permanence* desires the eternal as knowable whereas the poet of *becoming* is aware of this failure and intends it. In Burnside, the divided consciousness (faith and doubt) spurs spirit to fulfil itself; for Rigby, the impossibility of knowledge is due to the self-cancelling of the lyric (as annihilation) in its attempt to formulate a song of response to the secluded rather than "simulacral second nature" (Rigby "(Im)possibility" 441). I need to bridge these positions.

We return here to the correlation between rational mind and systematized world (the problem of language use within the domain of knowledge and reason), and the possibility within this process to uncover a secret living organism outside the mind content. The Modernist extension of this -- to unconceal fragile and shifting allotropic and phenomenological states -- clarifies the contemporary. As a writer concerned with awakening the preternatural sensorium, as

with D.H. Lawrence, Burnside translates temporal ecstasies relating to the ineffable into the essentialism of the soul-in-flux and the intertwining of faith and doubt. Both poets inherit Thomas Hardy's social realism pitted against a cosmic background, but dark subterranean religious impulses and the architectonics of sublimity that defy literalism are given (an albeit difficult) passage from Modernism into the light empirical of the anti-essentialist ecopoetic by Burnside.

There is always a place on the way  
 where the path curls into the dark,  
  
 into the smell of dust  
 and the stillness of nettles. ("Dark Green" MOT: 1-4)

Behind the Williamsesque urban history of remnants and whispers of the material world clipped into semantic clusters with high visual resonance, Burnside offers a model of continuation between forms, "an empty skull, a ribcage stitched with grass" (8) realised once one has stepped into "the shade" (7). The darkness promotes neither morose nor dangerous undertones, but growth from nothing (Stevens). As a means to focus on the micro, at this phase in his poetry which is attempting to escape the self and enter world, the expansive lines of co-extension of TAD are quite distant in the recoiling lines of this collection. Here, the stress on 'always' echoed in line-ending but programmed in each breath so that "place" "curls", literally enfolding upon itself while it reaches inwards to the "smell" and "stillness" of "nettles" through the physical movement of the tongue in the alveolar sounds. Following this signal dimension to the local focus of the lyric, the poem plots a journey to "lived" and then "swells", highly indicative of the 'light empirical', the positive sense of potential and futurity driven by but not bound by absence: this in itself is a challenge to poetic criticism channelled to

extrapolate the representative aspects of the lyric.

Conversely, to the poetics of Being and the extra-rational mind, Heidegger's poetics is not one of logocentric representation where Being can un-problematically become the theme of language, but as Clark argues, "[it is] the displacement of the realm of conceptuality" ("Being" 1013) -- as such it complements Bateson (above) and resists deconstructionist impossibility. Moreover, contrasted to de Man, Clark reads Heidegger's blindness to the "formal logic" of representation as an insight to the poetic force that "summons to presence" (1005) -- as Burnside indicates it is a momentary "place" that rests on "the way", the combination of fleeting and resting (James Principles). I confirm that this operates in Burnside's co-creative ecopoetic by revisiting the linguistic theories that inform Bate's and Rigby's theses in my next section. It provides the reader with an understanding of the applicability of negative poetics to contemporary poetics, a move that I make in this chapter's final section.

## II. The Homeland of the Poem

Andrew Bowie understands the German Romantic 'I' not as the spontaneous ground of epistemology but rather as that which endlessly "tries to overcome the 'lack of being' which results from its *failure* to ground itself" ("Romantic" 294, original emphasis). I am reading this an indication to the complexity of Burnside's themes: homesickness, exile in logos, and a 'home-self' seeking plenitude. Modern thought endeavours to establish the legitimacy for reason as the ground of truth while it sweeps away the notion of the deity's pattern imprinted in the universe, a guarantee of world order slipping into a narrative of the fall into particularity. I read contemporary ecopoetics as a new form of access to the world and the

self's place within it while accepting the Romantic refusal to incorporate final divisions between the understanding of self and the understanding of world, as a new extension to negative poetics backlit by the inquiry into the exclusive principle of rationalism within the crisis of meaning. As a signpost toward this position, Bate argues that the poem does not claim truth in-and-of itself but that it communicates the figural as figural:

The poet is often more vagrant than dweller, for he finds his home in the *logos* and not in the *oikos*. As Adorno put it... 'Words tend to bounce off nature as they try to deliver nature's language into the hands of another language foreign to it' [Adorno Aesthetic 108]. 'We see into the life of things' writes Wordsworth. *Ecopoiesis* knows that things have a life, but it also has to recognize that it can only communicate that knowledge in the form of propositions by using the divided Cartesian language of subject ('we see') and object ('the life of things') (Song 149).

Reading Heaney and Thomas, Bate understands the poet as a languaged human; this is set in contrast to the illiterate existentialism of the shepherd (Romantic 87-88, 96-115), which is the spontaneous ground to Bowie. Moreover, as a restatement of the distinction between techne (human made works) and physis (world made works) his position extends into a theory of poetry as phenomenological ecstasis that communicates "dwelling and alienation *in their very essence*, not just in the linguistic particulars" (Song 260, original emphasis). It negotiates the linguistic prison as exemplified by Wordsworth's use of negative prefixes in "Lines" alluding to indeterminacy (151).

Bate's human as a language animal (258) concerns Rigby, for its lack of ethical insight into the existence of the world before the evolution of humankind. Furthermore, to Rigby it provides the sole rights of the music of the planet to the human, a hubristic elevation of man as the only bearer of language (Rigby "Poets" 12; sustained in "Song" 396 and throughout Topographies). The idea of synchronicity with others -- which is emphasized by Heidegger's emphasis that only

Dasein has a world -- however, underlines both Bate's and Rigby's theses and should be considered as a means to understand the limitations to their differences (both being informed by Taylor and Bowie). I shall turn to this before further engagement with Rigby's negative poetics.

For Taylor, vocabulary articulates rather than creates understanding; language is constitutive of the world's intelligibility, it is not a representational system of external objects (Bowie "Idealism" 241). Taylor's reading of Heidegger is one that considers survival and the history of Being as one of *discovery* where language enables us to find the connection to the historical essence or to think beyond our flourishing alone: Burnside's priority in the dwelling trilogy that I locate as a concern following a move out of selfhood and out from ideas about healing and into a model of life: "the meadows they had laced with given names / muffled in snow / the net of birdsong / gone" ("Adam and Eve" TAD: 14-17); "beyond what we know / as language / and pledged to a moon" ("Another Poem About Fish" TLT: 45-47); "the household we have in common / but don't quite share, / *sub voce* songs, the garden's unnamed roses" ("Annunciation with Zero Point Field" TGN: 22-24).

This comes not from nature but from a constitutive theory of language and pragmatics, one that is opposed to instrumental enframing but pictures human life in a complex framework independent of language. This is at the core of ecopoetics' negotiation of representation politics. Taylor argues that language does not prioritize the facilitation of ideas (classes, laws, rules etc.) into view but speaks of "the world of our involvements", a world which is not seen as preceding us and indifferent but one that speaks of our positioning and "all the things [our involvements] incorporate in their meaning for us" (252). This is not an anthropocentric elevation but an elevation of language over time. Language speaks



and the human needs to listen to its dimensions, which are shaped less than a tool (Rigby) and more as the essence of being (Burnside). The agency of more than one subject (which is Bate's use of Heidegger) permits a world that is not of our making, Taylor argues, but "the necessary context for all our acting and making" (263). This defines the background to all speech serving beyond ourselves: an idea of the human as shepherd and guardian, neither steward nor creator. I read this in concert with Clark and I take this as the crucial element in Burnsidean ecopoetics, which I forward throughout my analysis. I follow Taylor, reading this as the common space or opening of moods e.g. wonder, grief, terror, in a primordial relationship to thought (in contrast to the non-historical modes of anxiety and boredom). This is distinct from passing temperaments and is non-instrumental. It is the ethical 'letting be' of the dynamic potential resting outside repose/action dichotomies. More clearly (and perhaps slightly reductionist), it is not "destining" (Taylor 263), the strategy-less and unsustainable but a new method where expectation replaces will, and as Haar argues, "all the possibilities of praxis" are given their historical ground ("Attunement" 159). Again the site of our words and actions measured in degrees under ethical terms of practice.

Haar's theory of language centres upon a dichotomy between "affectedness" and "conceptual language" revealing that in the former to be thrown is to bear "projection [into] being with others" (159) as affect, while the latter merely names (161). It is upon the former site, the 'open', that Haar speaks of Heideggerian thrown-ness (into time) as post-metaphysical and post-historical, for its relationship with being is new, seeing things for the first time where being thrown is always determined but only into a world of possibility (thus the historical dimension is sustained). Thrown-ness, therefore, is the situation where being is an issue for itself:

the Da of Sein, unique to humans as a clearing or space between things and point of relation before comprehension and encounter. It is why Burnside foregrounds this state within a constructionist poetic, transparently offering his model of anthropocentrism while paradoxically attempting to capture light from the world (inspiration and enlightened facts), rather than trap it; it is why we are engaged with the post-Romantic investigation into the life-world:

but nothing has ever spoken, nothing has come  
from the elsewhere I measure out in songs and dreams,  
although I glimpse, in spite of what I know,

the guessed-at world where nothing has been said  
but everything is on the point of speaking ("Annunciation with  
Zero Point Field" (TGN: 52-56)

If the human inquiry is read as one within the life-world then the world (inclusively conceived) evokes itself to itself as it declares that it is doing so or not. More traditionally, the quotidian viewed either after "looking up from a half-read book" (57) or quarried into "songs" and "dreams" is left "on the point" or verge of finding its own voice in the poetry that resonates around it which results in Kantian projection yet is aware of the human imposition and thus lies in a site "in spite of what I know". Without the use of "nothing" this would be less arguable, I concede, and less available to the general reader, but I would like to stress that this device is making a phenomenological point. Rather than positing 'nothing' as an entity, it is an attempt to strain language as a means to offer immediate experience that is so raw that it precedes attempts to describe it (Scruton 276). Readers are constantly pushed over the tipping point between quiet poetics and the named world, or the mediated nothing, which always *at that point* becomes something, even if only "guessed at" and not reduced to taxonomy. It is poetry about phenomenology, poetry using terminology from quantum mechanics to

indicate a low level of energy in interactions in nature turned metaphor by the un-use of words in the poem yet contrarily filling a space other than offering blankness (which in the zero-point field indicates an enormous energy that is not wildly evident). It is the case of being involved in the world but uncertain as to one's influence in reading the world, the Heisenberg principle brought home to language through a sense of being involved or thrown into world. This is why Stevens takes precedence in Burnside's canon for his unravelling of this domain slips easily into Heideggerian poetics and the sense of the open. As a model of thinking, thrown-ness in language is not contractive or simply a human language in essence (Rigby's appropriation of Bowie, Hart, and Bonnefoy), but *open-ended*, drawn from mutability without dominance and offers the language of b/Being: that which speaks of possibility and potentiality and bridges mood (affectedness) and thinking (conceptual life). For Haar, this bridge is delivered from "facticity and transcendence" (162): ecologically sound with respect to power dynamics and interestingly resonant with Burnside's contingent self and non-contingent soul.

## II.A. Notes Towards the Burnsidean 'I'

Schelling's Philosophy of Art (1802-3) does not constitute "a theory of language as correspondence or representation" (Bowie Schelling 118; cited Rigby Topographies 120) but formulates a position where art can be read as a continuation of nature's primary poesy. For Bowie, Schelling makes the distinction between the "living" word of language, poesis, and the "spoken" or "congealed" word. The first corresponds to an "expanding" force whereas the latter, the material signifier, corresponds to a "contracting force" (Schelling 118). The material dimension "allows meaning to be determinate at all by

articulating the infinite multiplicity of the world's possibilities via a finite number of fixed and iterable signifiers" (93). That is to say, the world of unfinished, developing, and emerging objects presents a problem to a limited array of signifying tools (Adorno Aesthetic), yet this does not conclude that a sum larger than its parts is impossible to communicate. This tension is of course a site of strife reminiscent of Heidegger's origin within art: the war between the concealed and unconcealed where language is read as an *aspect* of the world. Its energy is the world evoking itself.

Bowie's analysis emphasizes Schelling's departure from Fichte as "an expressly ecological conception of nature" (Schelling 46) where the System of Transcendental Idealism, the return of science to poetry, is an explication of self-consciousness that enables nature to be understood, whereas Fichte's model sustained the Kantian split between interior and exterior (Bate "Culture" 553). Horstmann clarifies that Fichte's 'I' as self-positing agent is actor and product of act, as such it counter-posites the 'not-I' (125). Zöller notes that the absolute 'I' is an empirical, finite human, and is thus not a master (202-3); moreover, the positing of the 'not-I' is the limit of the activity of the 'I', which is not the ground of willing but is rethought as the basic mode in which thinking takes place (206). I find that Bowie's explication is derived from within an ecology of the 'I', the 'not I', and the 'Absolute I', written in historical terms of psychological progression where objective nature is read as an elementary stage of the 'I' before consciousness, with each subsequent stage of development limiting the activity of the 'I' (Bowie Schelling 48). Extending this argument into the foundation for the split between mind and world mismanages the grammar of thought that suggests a parallelism -- if not synergy -- between cognition and object, a fitting of mind and world and thus a movement toward reconciliation rather than disjunction. Here language as

aspect comes forth and I encourage the reader once more to view Burnside's 'I' as an attempt to outline this state. It reads as a version of the Emersonian "not me": nature that includes the subject's body (Nature, 1836, Collected 1: 8). Here, the body located in space is an object of outer sense; however, as a matter of greater significance, the subject is read as one in concert with the productivity of nature, part of the expanding force of the universe:

What is meant here is something more mutually and functionally interdependent between mind and terrain, an organic relationship between the environment and the unconscious, the visible space and the conscious, the ideas and the creatures (Shepard Animals 35).

Nature as an organic totality that encompasses mind and matter (that emerge through time) offers composition of organic and inorganic nature that belies an opposition between mechanism and organism that thwarted Fichte. This disputes inherently reflexive metaphysics and its determination to locate the mind within the world via reason, a fatal narcissistic flaw that Emerson claims, "sees the world as a reflection of itself" (10), for the absolute is irreducible to this reflection. Moreover, this ecology forwards a conception of life (Being) not of individual (being): a field non-dependent upon a subject.

Idealism's exclusion of naturalistic realism through absolute knowledge to reflect the nature of reality and therefore transcend subjectivity and Kant's dualism, offers categories not only in the subject mind but as part of the object world, too. Fichte's reconfiguration moved transcendental thought towards a philosophy of nature. Within his imperative to assert that a wholly objective world could not support "self-determining subjectivity" that articulates the objective world (Bowie "Idealism" 245), the possibility of a teleological structure to nature was elasticized.

This is deployed to assert that "nature cannot accidentally coincide with human principles of knowledge" but rather, as Sturma elaborates, "knowledge about nature becomes possible only *because* it is an organism and functions according to the same basic principles as we do" (234). In his System of Transcendental Idealism Schelling envisions a structural system that reads the technique of nature as a self-organising isomorphism, wherein subject, object, and all disparate entities unite as counterparts of a larger spirit (Horstmann 132). It is not far from a statement declaring these as aspects of an ecology (Bowie Schelling 46). Ontologically this pre-objective intellectual intuition is an immediate epistemic relation of spirit to itself (133), an absolute identity that can differentiate itself as subject from the world through pragmatic relations and experience. It is what Burnside forwards in "Iona" and a model of an historical 'I' that the phenomenological attempts to reach.

It's gone before I've seen it: details  
 changing  
     light  
 imagining a world:  
         the play of wind  
 and traffic  
     voices  
         footsteps on the street  
 intruding on my thoughts like some  
 perpetual fill of space  
         or coming home ("The Hay Devil" TAD 5: 13-23)

The fleeting and urgent epistemic relation of spirit to self: here, a breathless spray of empirical events fluttering out into the loose line from the left margin are threaded by the phenomenological anchoring, which is "imagining" but also "intruding" on itself. As an attempt to offer a lack of arrival while reading world from beyond the horizon of self, the phenomenological 'I' is limited in its capacity to draw the reader in beyond the reporting, collating, and

constructive 'I'. We have the field of energies that operate across human and nature, that is threaded in the life-world. However, whereas Heidegger proposes a subject within the midst of environmental factors (time, history), this field represents the dissolution of identity into the (self-creative) agency of nature. But does the stress on disappearance and the stress on home, enable Burnside to move beyond the miraculous way of world and allow it to enter mind as if one state were attainable? I feel that the technique of nature as a self-organising isomorphism posited by Schelling's idea of the ideal and the real as different degrees of the same, not differences of kind, is one that the measure within Burnside's poetry often falls short of when it is attempting this -- seen most especially when traditional criticism remains closed to the ecological aspect of the constructed poetic semiosphere. It is this measure of different degrees of the same by which I understand Bowie's ecological analogy and it must be the site where the limit of the phenomenological lyric (and traditional phenomenological criticism) is interrogated: in Burnside it offers, perhaps only knowingly in moments of self-scrutiny, the limit and negation of the phenomenological stance.

An undercurrent in philosophy beginning with Fichte and reaching a modern articulation in Bergson considers purposiveness as a responsive method within the crisis of representation to negotiate (Kantian) transcendental apperception -- self-consciousness from consciousness of objects derived from the application of categories. I believe that a theory of negative poetics that draws from an argument that the world cannot be articulated (Rigby), and from a position that states intuition is higher than reason but cannot be languaged, is one that promotes inadequacy over the positive necessity of forming a parsing between world and word. It is through

reading contemporary poetry, especially eco-phenomenological poetry, that one can enter this gap or impasse to view the ontology of mind in world and to locate world in mind simultaneously, regardless of representational failure or success. Moreover, to overemphasize the linguistic system under terms of success and failure underplays the 'I' as the highest principle of subjectivity in Romantic poetics; it is to understate the distinction of the synthetic mind (the b/Being of the subject) -- that which is prominent in this site -- from the thinking of the subject (the cogito) (Bowie Aesthetics 21). The subject realm, drawing from Bowie's ecology, forwards relationship not deferral, which underlines phenomenal activity over the semiotic and semantic burdened reflective stance (cogito), it is embedded even if it is not amalgamated. This is not to mistake grammatical form to the subject as a metaphysical entity but to show the possibility and spectral dynamism of life; it is perhaps an understanding of the gap between synthesis and assimilation or between apprehension and comprehension.

The example of this selected for the 'ecopoetics' section of the St Andrews School of English poetry magazine, The Red Wheelbarrow:

I was thinking of somewhere else,  
the country, say, of how things look for others:  
towns glimpsed in transit: a play park, those salt-coloured  
houses  
where people like us are living a life like ours. ("Homage to  
Henri Bergson" 5: 1-5).

It is a site delineating the original gesture of the poet and the poetics of receipt: a 'country' defined by 'others' yet one urging a greater fusion of nature and culture than that given over by the heavy-handed although probably off-handed improvisation, "salt-coloured houses", which stands as an admission of the potential difficulty outside simile: what Stevens calls "the intricate evasions of as" ("An Ordinary Evening in New Haven" Collected 28: 16). It is



"the poem of the mind in the act of finding" itself and rethinking the notion of invention ("Of Modern Poetry": 1), what Stevens' calls "the cry of its own occasion" ("An Ordinary Evening in New Haven" 12:1): the stage where poetry performs and which should be the site of its inquiry into its form, part of the reality itself and not a veil over that which lies behind. In contemporary ecopoetics the site of negative poetics is reclaimed in the manner that suggests the use of the qualifier 'negative' only as a subtraction of the notion of one-way agency as Burnside's poem indicates. Here, the thought of the perception of others is of one reflecting upon the site under view to the mind's eye, which leads to a view of the self communally enfolded into history. Theoretically it can be seen in concord with Husserl's "pre-predictive experience" that is life before it is "formulated in judgements and expressed in outward linguistic form" (Husserl §26, 27), a site of ever renewed and infinitely elaborating acknowledgement, a form of eternal return driven by poetic projective saying (rather than prescriptivism) of a world to itself rather than to a non-relational subject.

This resonates both with Bowie's elementary stage of the 'I' and the negation of preconception (above), and negotiates Kant's need for practical reason following the limitation of reason derived from understanding delivered by the categorical judgement (introduction). It also rings true with Walter Benjamin's thoughts on translation and the work of art as artefact without intention to an audience, a world unfolding to itself (ch. 5, sec. I.B.). To clarify this briefly, Heidegger's Being and Time reads 'being' not as an existential question of the (creationist) rise from nothingness but as a "fore-theoretical historically determined intelligibility" (McGrath 340). Heidegger's models of thrownness, language as pragmatically contextual, and death enfolded within life, complement his paradigm of intuition and appear to be the philosophical ground to the

majority of Burnside's poetry. I articulate this site as an intuitive-historical intelligence reflecting upon creation. Husserl departed from the Kantian division of subjectively generated and received data of experience by positing the notion that the categorical and intuitive are not neatly divided as such, and moreover, that the given is structured i.e. it calls forth the category. Heidegger believes ontological knowledge to be intuitive and that judgement of this is derivative and secondary. Knowing is more complex than looking; it is more than an apprehension of a presence. Thus intuition and immediacy (although regularly conceived as granular degrees of the same process of apprehension) are, for Heidegger, separated. Mute sense experience does not allow unconcealment by itself, for the primacy of cognition within the process of intuition is coupled to the mediation of experience. Heidegger's phenomenology frees up the basic experiences of thinking by annulling the traditional dichotomy between intuition and expression. As a language model, the intuited is always already expressed; conversely, the primal expression, McGrath shows, is not the construction or projection of a subject but an intuited domain of meaning (342): this is what Heidegger means by self-manifestation as "its shining itself" (Time 79). Burnside's positing of the phenomenological frame (as in "Annunciation with Zero Point Field", above) is not completely convinced by the collapse of modal difference between intuition and expression for it may remove human agency by too great a degree as it moves to promote the universal way of things. I return the reader to Burnside's proprioception:

And say it was out there, out in the snow,  
 Meshed with the birdsong and light  
 The way things are real: a blackbird, a scribble of thorns,  
 A quickening into the moment, the present tense ("The myth of  
 the twin" (2) MOT: 6-9)

Here an empty and still non-revelation brokered by the need to instil world into language, into a 'scribble' of the given is one 'meshed' by sonics and optics, world and mind. The way things appear to the 'I' and the degree to which empirical sense perception guarantees the 'I' (or is a necessary condition to it), delivers a different reasoning engine where the mind does not order objects of its thought but accepts material input from the outside. This triggers intellect to lead toward cognition of selfhood and world without a necessary statement (or complete account) of self-consciousness or the total realm of existence as intelligible: it offers only the fictive imagined community, as stressed in the pressure for complicity in "say".

For Burnside, to enter into this way of the world neither presents the "after-image of nature's *meaningful* silence" (Adorno Aesthetic 109, emphasis added) -- reconciliation outside structured systems -- nor philosophical abstraction or inward reflection alone; neither does it eclipse these by attending to the referent at the loss of all other inquiries and contexts, which might be a dimension Burnside reads in British and Irish poetry. The entrance promotes an understanding of the subject within this space, "the present tense" that could be termed in light of the Heisenberg principle 'a modality of acknowledgement of the other underwritten by involvement', or 'the phenomenology of interdependency and creative interaction'; for Burnside, it suggests, "identity of [the] onlooker indistinguishable from the things perceived" ("Place"). It is a fiction:

as if this was the story of a place  
that I could tell without impediment:  
first thought, then form, a drift of native souls  
scattered across the land like seed or snow ("Uley, Glos", MOT:  
8-11)

The formation of thought from nature entering mind, is likened to

an imagined topos, a "sieve of consciousness" (12) which is the "making" of the "commonplace domain" (13). Burnside's collections are peppered by the phrase "the way" indicating his many variations of the lived world gathered via (phenomenological) intentionality: the directedness of the lyrical 'I' as an event of the world's disclosure and as receptacle of the world's expression; in "Uley, Glos", it is only the title that inserts a border between real and imagined, "the giving up and taking on of names" (15), the way world reveals itself to the human or the way the human receives world. I chose to clarify this further due to the import to ecocriticism of the Bate-Rigby dispute.

Intentionality as consciousness of experience is the "egocentric predicament" (Sokolowski 9); a predicament that is not univocal but differentiated within consciousness depending on the object of intuition (public, private, past present) and the mood, state, and attitude of the subject, and the method of the objects' appearance. While intentionality posits the precondition of the world as the site for disclosure to a subject -- the world being, to a degree, dependent upon human technologies for its expression (that is, for Heidegger, meaning is not independent of the world but that entities are meaning laden, words world laden) -- poiesis operating as an event decreates the subject-predicate model. It posits the pre-grammatical object world that negates the reduction or mistranslation of world into the "unfathomable" by tempering narrowly conceived negative poetics and offering insight into the subject who only receives the world via the unveiling to which they are indelibly a part. It heightens awareness of the movement and destabilization of grammar as the event of language that discloses the world in the moment of apprehension. I have shown in Burnside that it is where Rigby's concern for anthropolatry (bestowing divine honours to the

human, above) is revisited, not as the inventor of systems but rather the process of language as "the medium through which being *as system* comes to understand itself" (Colebrook 85, original emphasis). In its most complete poetic appraisal or "stylistic principle" -- as Buell has noted in Emerson -- it understands that "intellectual honesty requires being faithful to those oscillations between epiphany and blankness, to the inevitable incompleteness of any 'final' result" (Emerson 113). Incompletion does not spell unfathomability; it offers the embodiment of potential, which is the unfulfilled material self in Burnside's poems, alive to the world unfolding.

## II.B. The Contemporary

Burnside's full speech is written and fuelled by Heideggerian projective saying (Language 66, 123; Poetry 39) where each instance of the word is in itself the relation of word to thing that retains the thing within itself: the "saying of the unconcealment of beings" ("The Origin of the Work of Art", 1935-1936, Basic 198-199; cited Burnside "Strong Words" 260). This voice re-politicised reveals "*what already is*" in the world (Burnside Polemic 6-7, original emphasis). For the poet, it is resistance to the narratives of capitalist hegemony, for the modality of the lyric centres the human in "a spiritual way [as a] making of *home*" ("Strong Words" 260, 261, original emphasis). For Burnside, poetry works in the area "where you can't say about the world, you can only show" (Herbert "Interview" 80): voice is a site of possibility.

Indicative of Burnside's early work, "Pleroma" (FD) speaks of fullness and plenitude as a relationship to place:

...where you stop  
to meet the sun  
as if its light were something you had  
formed around, a brightness from within,  
the life before you are, that always was. (10-14)

In the sonnet-hymn, the voice reflects upon the centrality of the subject yet the self is pragmatically configured when reading is encouraged to engage with the spirit of development in the poem. Here the experience sees life as potential for relations. It is a Rilkean theme of 'loss as value' remade as the positive within the unfulfilled state. The line-break at "had" suggests the slipping of possession into eternal adaption; it is scaffolded by mood characterized by awe as tonality that maintains astonishment in looking, and whose voice finds origin not in human subjectivity (the recourse to interiority) but in the world (Haar "Attunement" 160). Moreover, to pause or dwell in the space of time is to open the encounter of nature not as a plane of difference that gives Being, but as pronounced in the writing of "life" as eternal and pre-existent to the human, as an affordance of the knowledge that Being is differential in itself. It is to write the occurrences of the world as events in a field, which extends beyond singularities. This is an intellectual understanding of Shelling's ecology, the event of language, and the site of world revealing itself to an embedded 'I': the ecological fabric within reckoning and yet beyond name.

Despite the circumference of "you" in the opening and closing lines of the sense unit, Burnside is attempting an articulation of the circular reciprocation of being thrown and being projected into the possible, which as Haar identifies, locates a totality "in as much as the subject and the object are indissociable within it" (162). It is interesting to note that Burnside achieves this through the second person pronominal emphasis. The patterning of short feet echoed by the assonance of the vowel sounds 'o' and 'a' in "stop" and "was", elongated in the middle line's enjambment but essentially denoting a form of continuum across present and past tenses -- a version of life in form as with the growth from the sun in subject. "Stop" emphasizes oral quietude and the garden fire's smoke barring

vision as incitement to enter outwith the world of sense impressions while also anchoring physical movement into a moment out of present time and without agency. As a point of reflection and glance backwards it represents human and world as one via *ecstasies*.

Respectively, the line-endings emphasize moments of stillness and reflection, the shift into poetic language and spatial hermeneutics, the need to concretise things, and to listen to the necessarily understated and simple sense of our primary selves. This constellation reminds readers of "the fabrication of space in which any number of futures may happen", a mode of living by "the inevitable narratives of emergence rather than the authorised versions of history" ("Fact Fiction History Myth..." 2). Is this circular and evasive? The music stretches fast mono-syllabics into expansive feet and accented rhymed vowels in "light" and "brightness" presenting an unfolding synecdoche of the small extending into the whole. The relinquished 'I' reverberating in the sun's bequeathing displaced by "you" as an indiscriminate objective 'I', moreover, is correlate to the music and effects self incorporated into other, while time, rather than deterministic and linear, folds back upon itself (as with "Dark Green" MOT, above). Here the "always was" resonates with befindlichkeit, the human capacity to feel, particularly in respect to time. Thus the poem instances ecopoetic 'fullness', which Burnside named "pure space" ("Pleroma" 5). If one posits a circle one will find a circle; if one posits a line one will find a line. Within this poetic perhaps the critic should look closer at voice rather than configuring a frame?

## II.C. Burnside's Voice

Burnside's performance commentary, Quartets, crystallizes several

poetic counters in a broader context.<sup>27</sup> "Parousia" is the series that ends SIF and contends with the linguistic problem of writing the ineffable and the metaphysical that speaks of a continuum in our dwelling place, the earth, for which we are (at times and in certain manners) nostalgic. Burnside comments:

[Parousia] means the presence, in Catholic tradition... the presence of Christ on earth, as it were; the presence of Christ with us. But I like to think of it in a broader sense. I was brought up as a Catholic in Scotland and I was educated in all kinds of arcane Catholic beliefs and I thought for some time that I was very much involved with the Catholicism of the Catholic church, and then my interests broadened out and I turned away from, basically, the Christian tradition, and though I still use some of the iconography, I felt as though I was interested in a more widely based spiritual sensibility; so the ideas of *parousia* as explored in this sequence of poems... is more to do with the idea of the soul or the spirit and how it is wedded to matter; that we can't actually say that the spirit or the soul exists in any other way except through the material. So it's a kind of anti-dualist poem in that sense.<sup>28</sup>

One could read this anti-dualism as being present within an absolute presence (of soul, or mind, wedded to matter). A non-hierarchical model suggests animistic vitalism distinct from the material yet against Lamarckian biological vitalism that distinguishes between living and non-living things. Burnside's materialism relates to the non-contingent soul yet its basis is in spiritual sensibility. This negates multiplied animality via inheritance and negates change driven by physiological needs; moreover, as his materialism resides not within a discourse of origin and that it is derivative of Romantic selfhood defined against authority, it is clearly non-transcendental and can be particularized. To underline this and emphasize the invisible interconnectedness of Being (the fabric that I have identified) Burnside's reading ends with the paired poems "Geese" and "The Asylum Dance" (TAD), bonding a poem of the natural

---

<sup>27</sup> rec. 2 June 2000.

<sup>28</sup> Supported Dosa interview 12.



world and the world of the mind in order to restate the non-material that is "wedded to matter". The poems end with these lines, respectively: "how the flesh belongs" (80); and "[figures venturing on form] as if they were all one flesh, in a single dream, / and nothing to make them true, but space and time" (85-86). The poem offers a lyrical voice negotiating the processes of naming, perception, and frames of reference: key terms that I have introduced in this chapter.

These lines are not necessarily deconstructive but perhaps lie closer to the Weilean conception of decreation, which Burnside reads in Stevens: "[naming] which has already shattered itself even in the sounding, so that there may occur only that which was sung itself" (Heidegger Poetry 139). This model reads space and time as meaningfully relational structuring concepts, which as Kantian a priori essential conditions of perception re-activate the blind-spot with respect to the idea of presence in-itself beyond the individual -- something vacant and conceptual without a full understanding of their mutual reliance. Here, embedded into the phenomenological flesh they allude to the ecological cartographic as the only metanarrative of energy. Moreover, as a pragmatist conception of the flux of life outwith the conceptual, it relates back to Bergson:

The definition that James gives of truth is one flesh with his conception of reality... And if the reality does not form an ensemble, if it is multiple and mobile, composed of criss-crossing currents, the truth which is born from a *direct participation* in one of these currents - truth felt *before being conceived* - is more capable than the truth, which is simply thought, of seizing and storing up reality itself.<sup>29</sup>

The fluid, interdependent world requires a mind derived from this knowledge of world outside economic thinking, to Bergson, and one

---

<sup>29</sup> Bergson's introduction to the French edition of James' Pragmatism (1959); cited Sprigge 143-144; my emphasis.

willingly interdependent, too; it is a coordinate in its own right preferring entities over concepts, existence before essence. This indication of the coordinate -- or the determining of our position within the universe -- does not necessitate a rejection of universalism via privileging the subjective self and the particulars of experience, but indicates that the experiential can dissolve arbitrary boundaries of the self while maintaining consciousness within complex relational dynamics. Burnside's phenomenology rests awkwardly here. A difficulty that has been discovered via first analyses of Burnside's poetry with respect to the Heideggerian spatial-logocentric contention in deconstruction, its influence upon contemporary criticism, and the understanding of world as *component of our mental state*. This might not be the most suitable critical tool to explicate this state in normative terms, but it has indicated that component dynamics bring into relief the delicate utilization of world over models of panpsychism.

### III. Towards a Conclusion

For Rigby, the pantheistic vision of Wordsworth and Coleridge implies "an understanding of the divine as simultaneously immanent and transcendent" (Topographies 48): not an authority beyond but one interfused (271). Reading Burnside's vision of the encounter with nature as the manifestation of this interfusion, or as a re-articulation of nature's indecipherable book of God's second scripture irrespective of an interfusion (which does not necessarily state that nature has no principle, even if it has no semantic principle of practical utility), may be to offer too direct a conclusion in either case. However, one cannot dissociate Burnside from three ideas that have been drawn into philosophical and historical context above. Firstly, Rigby's contention that complex

interrelationships of natural systems can be mimicked by web-like poetic texts as a way out of technological enframing, appears paramount to an inquiry into Burnside.<sup>30</sup> Secondly, Bowie's contention that the Romantic self could not become transparent to itself as an object of knowledge, must be analysed in the case of contemporary poetry to ascertain whether or not post-Transcendentalist Romanticism and the ecopoetic consider this as imperative to understanding Being-in-the-world. Finally and thirdly, that to assert the self as an entity channelled by language alone --- a point of contention in the Romantic period and in subsequent criticism -- would offer the dependency of consciousness upon language as an overemphasis of the fact that we are thrown into life amidst an already existent language and are ever increasingly engaged with a mediated, material world.

In "Iona" (2000), the essay on solitude, the quest for meaning, and the radicalizing of the spiritual within historical and cultural materialism, Burnside offers a paradigm of thought that can view the self via the poetic gaze upon the palimpsests of reality as the fabric of life. The poet draws resources from the island as if it were a culturescape able to out-manoeuvre self and re-read historical systems of representation. The church represents an expression of values and an image of continuity, both historical suffering and repression as a source to ideological construction. It echoes with Rilke's seventh elegy where once enduring houses have now passed

---

<sup>30</sup> I am using the notion of ge-stell from Heidegger, as framework. Heidegger reads beyond the mechanical in his concept of technology (Question) as such it purports arrangement and tendency. It relates to Michel Foucault's (1926-1984) thoughts on depositif. The Latin root of which, dispositio, a translation of Greek house administration, oikonomia, evokes the sacred as that which is removed from the free use of man, and that which accents the historically contingent. Heidegger would read this in terms of energy (as would Deleuze), Foucault in terms of (bio)power. See p. 308, n. 73.

"completely / belonging to the realm of concepts" (53-54) with the counter-effect of shedding light on a subject whose stance is outside political grammar. Burnside resists identity politics by viewing the geographic as an arrangement around a core e.g. a church or marketplace (Adorno Aesthetic 93). Art's representation closer to the Kantian thing-in-itself than mere subjectivity suggests to Adorno, physic; in Burnside we collocate time. The cognitive, intentional site, written as an example of "stepping out into the open" (93), attains through placing the chapel as a site that denies a superimposed narrative, and enables him to take the thesis of the sublime out into abstraction to speak of Scotland and America, alluding to a poetic metaphysic of art. Unlike Wordsworth's late sonnets where metonymic chapels suggest the possibility of escape to places beyond (Kerrigan), Burnside's site witnesses and endorses the fragility of earth and history; a position that provides the poet with a deep sense of connection to the point of revelation. This is not an image of the connoisseur of art but is a reading of the "imprint" of time (Adorno Aesthetic 95), historical continuity and nostalgia triggered by the earth "ravished by utilitarian pseudo-progress", a backwardness geared to generate "a livable life" (95):

Walking along a beach on an island at the edge of the Atlantic,  
 you suddenly see yourself from outside, no isolated figure, but  
 one woven into the continuum of human history (Burnside "Iona"  
 25).

This dispensable self is a model of non-egocentric life; how it is woven into the rhythm and melody beyond the linguistic is how it is not subjectless. It is a view of recollection as regulated, calm thought gathering one's self again as a form of possession. As graceful momentum, it is characterized by the redemptive musical aspects found in the lyrical devices of expansive verse, those especially composed to emphasize echo, half-rhyme, and the subtle

nuances of extended articulation slowly emerging into different semantic gestures within a single complex pulse. In addition to the line-break offering plural meanings, it is where cosmic white noise enables *significance* to replace the priority afforded to *meaning*. It is another instance of preference satisfaction overridden by the worthwhile meaningful act: agency that registers Heideggerian thought.

Furthermore, post-pastoral iconography in "Iona" reconnects to Romantic decay to posit a sensibility that is no longer an empty subject but a vessel of receptivity and the event of active saying. Burnside articulates bi-direction via allusion to Taoism in later collections; however, crucially here, it is not a ground but a *being there* in intentional disclosure, the horizon of Dasein itself as the affordance of an empirical world for us. Philosophically, this detached perspective -- one that does not exclude the subject and is without recourse to identifying a principle of subjectivity -- does not state the subject as sovereign but negotiates the division between or relationship across sensuous particularity and transcendental essences in its non-representational offering of the horizon of experience. Contemporaneous to TAD, this is Burnside establishing parousia within lyrical defiance in not being spirited away by the immediate or by mind. A significant moment, I feel, where phenomenon and concept are both harnessed and negotiated. Chapters two and three develop the progression to this position.

By offering consciousness as the site of interrelations and not the ordering of relations, this ecological 'I' can be read as a post-Romantic distribution of the panopticon, where power is dissolved and "an inner self or soul is effected" (Colebrook 177): gathering resources for the human spirit internally rather than from external authority. This can be read as the first step in Rilkean consciousness before the external world can reveal itself, or as a

phase before Stevens' external self that is not autocatalytic but promotes itself within a larger field of complexity and as such is accountable and open rather than a veiled compression of fragments. It "fills the four corners of night" ("A Rabbit as King of the Ghosts" 19) as an identity dissolved into the site of renewal. Simone Weil has suggested that the incentive for seeking joy is not necessary in fulfilment derived from relinquished self-centring; nor is the ability to hear misery afforded, for "no corner is left for saying 'I'" (Stevens 27). This European-North American collocation informs Burnside's ethics as each chapter will reveal; I revisit this in depth in chapter five.

Burnside's poetics can be seen as responding to an anxiety of human-world relations under the influence of Stevens and Bishop, while also inheriting the Shelleyan and Wordsworthian living tenor of the earth with consonance to phenomenologically conceived "reverberations" as a motif of the living principle of continuum in earth and in text, the opposite to causality (Bachelard xii). This principle is symbolized in the cover design to TLT. The front of the volume is illustrated with a Hopi emergence symbol centred between the poet's name and work's title.<sup>31</sup> In line with the lack of metaphysical concepts that isolate world from dynamic experience, the symbol expresses the myth and meaning of emergence -- a labyrinth known as 'mother and child': a matrix of world energy and spiritual rebirth from one world or form to another, a dynamic circular unity (Allen, P. 247) and poetic forwarding of right dwelling. From distance, the image looks like an amplified fingerprint, neither map

---

<sup>31</sup> The Hopi people (Hopi'sinom, or "People Who Live in the Correct Way") renowned for the oldest continuously inhabited settlement within the United States of America at Oraibi, Arizona speak a language from the Uto-Aztecan family, which Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941) noted for its linguistic relativity -- the absence of words or grammatical forms that refer to western notions of time. See also Malotki Ekkehart.

nor maze but modality of identity. However, to enter into and walk this path is more about becoming and existing on the journey of life than it is about destination or achievement: a circular model of interdependence where origin and destination represented as the same now articulates the disposition Burnside's prose commentaries on contemporary poetry forwards (most especially "Mind" and "Travelling into the Quotidian"). This stance drives Burnside's post-phenomenological poetics worked through an engagement with Romanticism and American verse that I endeavour to illuminate further in the following chapters.

## 2. Formations

Poetry up to and including MOT is read in response to research questions raised in the light of negative poetics clarified in chapter one. Here, the position claims Burnside's American post-Romantic influences have a relation to his lapsed Catholicism, which does not deny him the notion of a soul. The qualification develops from the poet's inquiry into the idea of self being transparent to itself as an object of knowledge. Over the following two chapters I map how this idea is configured and conceived in particular terms (most especially in this chapter via 'precognition') which I illuminate through various post-Romantic interfaces to Burnside's early solipsism.

### I. Towards a Poetics of Home

Twentieth century deconstruction views transcendence both as shelter from the temporality of being and as a descendent move beyond the signifier or form towards paradox and contradiction, or -- as in Romanticism -- beyond time and place to seek truth independent of these counters and of language (ch. 1). American Transcendentalism's interest in pragmatist notions of partial and finite knowledge (relational and temporal) drives it toward the source of life from which all relations or terms emerge. Post-Transcendentalist post-Romanticism disputes the idea of source, for it encounters fragmentation and diffused constellations of energy and power over and above notions of origin; by extension, this rejects the attempt to restore centrality to man while offering apertures to the referent outside of man. I find this an interesting aspect of Burnside's wrestling with the lyrical 'I'. Again, the lack of raw state applies not only to world but to mind, too; it is a point that may raise the stakes of the issue of co-creation, while certainly positioning a space for coloured and glazed rather than transparent subjectivity. I deconstruct this and show that the view is one that contextualizes man as embodied by nature rather than dispatching him from the scene altogether. I advance two claims on these terms. First, Bate's conception of the ecopoetic and Rigby's outline of German Romanticism now seem problematic if projected across the contours of contemporary



practice on their own, thus my thesis begins to install an historical differential in its understanding of Burnside's poetic hinterland. Second, in rejoinder to the gap between Heideggerian ecopoetics and a philosophical treatise of nature, I offer Burnside's engagement with literary modes deriving from New England and from post-Romantic practice. This arrests a retrospective and teleological view of the traditions, and in my break from Rigby and Bate stresses an attempt to understand what a particular medial form means in a given historical context i.e. the neo-Romanticist in Burnside is to be viewed through historical forebears as a means to understand what is new and of interest in his poetry. My position is also sensitive to Burnside's position on the soul: "the underlying order, the fundamental connectedness, the soul energy", he stipulates "runs through everything"; this, however, "cannot be described, only intuited" ("Iona" 23). Burnside draws from phenomenology to evoke the intuitive process, heightening descriptions as they come to mind -- and that process itself -- while harnessing this to a particular disposition that wants to read home in a material sense free from the predilections of modern consciousness. This, therefore, returns to the self and rethinks the possibility of transparency.

Heidegger:

Being subject as humanity has not always been the sole possibility belonging to the essence of historical man... nor will it always be. A fleeting cloud shadow over a concealed land, such is the darkening which that truth as the certainty of subjectivity... lays over a disclosing event that it remains denied to subjectivity itself to experience. ("The Age of the World Picture", 1938, Question 132)

I would like to superimpose this language upon Burnside's poetry:

the woman beside him, clutching a silver frame,

her face dislodged, reduced to a puzzle of bone  
and atmosphere, the tremors on her skin

wayward and dark, like shadows crossing a field  
of clouded grain. (Burnside "Swimming in the Flood" 18-22)

The certainty of subjectivity drawing from an historical position is not available to Heidegger; the empty frame and relic of a home that once was is at once devoid of signification posited as point of focus on the other, and it acts as a symbol of loss and displacement in this poem. I find undertones in this veil of the lack of the certainty of the 'I' that was prepared in Christianity by the certainty of salvation. "Bone" and "atmosphere" collocate to stress finitude within an idea of ineffable change. Yet it is the flood, not subjectivity, in Burnside's poem that imposes itself upon the villagers -- something external bringing forth change. More than highlighting how man cannot abandon himself from modern destiny by his fiat alone, it is this idea that world is charged by the sense of being unrestricted and free, heralded by the word 'dislodged'. One would think that the contingent self would transform while the non-contingent soul would remain constant, however, it is the experience that is denied to subjectivity and escapes the human frame that is the focus here. It is the enduring preoccupation for Heidegger and Burnside. It is also prevalent in the poet's American forebears.

The mindset of Puritanism is aware of the poles of ratiocination and observation; as hermeneutic co-ordinates they are problematized by the vision's two predicaments spurned by Reformation legacy: "alienated imitation" and "egocentric idiosyncrasy" (Manning Puritan 193). In considering the gap between a hidden and 'unknowable' God (nature) of Puritanism, with respect to intelligibility and indeterminacy (ch. 1), my approach follows de Man's reading of Kant's third critique indicating that the sublime lacks purposiveness and is transcendental (as opposed to the beautiful that is metaphysical and ideological). Furthermore, judgement speaks of "the teleology of our

own faculties, specifically the relationship between imagination and reason" (Aesthetic 73). This position, clarified in prose, is what Burnside reads as a phenomenological influence in the Americans. How this operates or works as an influence is less easy to clarify without moving beyond the particular sensibility of each poem, but it does relate to energy in the poems (subject and technique) and to a sense of the provincial solitary inflected by a critique of an imposed power source or grammar, be that transcendental monism or corrupt epistemologies.<sup>32</sup> This is why Dickinson and Frost are prevalent here over Stevens. I use the position in this chapter to develop thoughts on solipsism. This is a first move as I extend this position to read perspective in chapter three. These two chapters, therefore, provide the basis for my reading to widen out into thoughts on dwelling and ecology in chapters four and five.

#### I.A. Lawrentian Latitudes

D.H. Lawrence seeks a localized individualism as the universal i.e. that different places have different vibrations and effluences. He reads the American rejection of European post-Renaissance humanism and liberalism as proof that a deeper form of being exists underneath or antecedent to mind where knowledge is considered a "death process" (76). Much as consciousness raised the idea of sin, mentalized sensualism extinguished truth; Lawrence seeks the reverse where "the homeland of the idea, of the *spirit*" is laid to rest for that of "the blood" (119, original emphasis) or (universal) locally non-transcended "world soul" (120). It is where Walt Whitman's refusal to build mansions ("Song of the Exposition", Leaves of Grass 1900, "Preface" 182) meets Burnside's use of Charles Bukowski ("The House", All's Normal Here, 1985) in TGN: the need to forget and relinquish

---

<sup>32</sup> Manning Fragments 259.

human technology in its largest conceptual sense and to be put out into place.<sup>33</sup> I see Burnside move to this position by going beyond the self through his inquiry into the self. This is where, to paraphrase Lawrence, the free soul purified of ego enables one to have sympathy with (not for) the world (183-7).

#### I.A.1. The Post-Puritan Matrix of Engagement

An ecological matrix promotes the idea of disparate elements within a field of vision and experience, the nexus as middle ground between structures. The reformed theology of John Calvin determines self via polarities: life and death, reprobate and elect, meaning and absence; by contrast, the Anglican mind eavesdrops upon the self in an act of acknowledgment and thus can "find a perspective from which to view [its] own littleness without belittling it, by recognizing a centre beyond [it]self" (Manning Puritan 16). This latter perspective is closest to the central mind that has undergone inflection within philosophical doubt -- David Hume; Friedrich Nietzsche -- resonating with the theological implications and anti-essentialism. It has been raised to another particularity, close to the ecological nexus, in the poetic expression in Stevens.<sup>34</sup>

When Heidegger wrote "To build is in itself already to dwell" (Poetry 146) as a resistance to origins and to show how each being is a node in a matrix of movement through time, he opened an ecological aperture into his existential reflections. The dichotomy in ecological ethics between the realist position claiming an immanent

---

<sup>33</sup> Also Burnside, "The House That Jerry Built".

<sup>34</sup> Critical context Melita Schaum, "'Preferring Text to Gloss': From Decreation to Deconstruction in Wallace Stevens Criticism," Wallace Stevens Journal, 10.2 (1986): 84-99; Timothy Clark, The Theory of Inspiration: Composition as a Crisis of Subjectivity in Romantic and Post-Romantic Writing (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997); and Vincent B. Leitch, Deconstructive Criticism: An Advanced Introduction (London: Hutchinson, 1983).

nature out there in the world, and the relativist position declaring the world as construct, opens a middle space where the "dwelling perspective" (Ingold Perception) forwards notions of co-evolution or the presentiment of nature and man in one. This presents a totality that is both a biological and cultural organism; an eco-perspective upon the dialectical work-in-progress of nature attending to the world in our actions, continually. Moreover, this brings into relief a pragmatic view of human-nature interactions through time and acts as toolkit to attune to Burnside's self-soul dynamic. As indicated above I have calibrated my reading of Burnside's poetry to ideas of co-creation (Schelling, Emerson, Ingold).

The phenomenological underwriting of the whole person active in environmental engagement where end-states, objects, and percept fall away from our knowledge offers the idea of the perceiver as product of perception (Ingold). This resists both the linguistic trickery of focussing on an organic development of the human and the distraction of applying the notion of culture to the non-human: it rethinks the paradox of non-anthropocentric ecopoetics as a misprision veiling the more crucial emphasis on action/praxis/involvement/techne. Engagement as interplay offers a model of responsibility and response; as ecology of encounter, it works the concept of otherness-in-relationship into pragmatics. By writing the way of the world beyond adverbial relations (the meta-attribute that qualifies or modifies) ecopoetics takes each temporal site as a nexus of relationships. Use of prosaic occlusion and the present participle affect the currency of relations:

Something is in the wood but nothing  
visible. Continuance; a filmy, brackish  
misting of oak and moss,  
cold as the shillings minted in the frost  
winking at the break of day through dusted grass:  
a faery money, changing in our hands  
to silverthaw. (CK "Home" 1-7)

Here, Coleridgean rhythms and muscle in the verse evoke the sense of change in this series of prose poems, which stretches out into stanzaic form, and flexes into couplet and expansive music with the widening over time of the aperture onto world. Here, the playful lexis of commodity culture is literally exchanged for a sense of the natural flesh of the wood and its undergrowth, evoking a sense of its isolation but of human involvement, too: it is a "vacant shroud" (12) but is "changing in our hands". This is not dualism but interplay as a node in a field; it is a gathering pregnant with past events and a chronicle of the moment in itself (Ingold Perception 1-30). As such, it is dwelling as an enterprise to read fullness and participate in richness and futurity recalling Burnside's "Pleroma", which Lawrence understands as the giving over of the self to the larger "IT", the spirit of place, communicated not by spirit but by blood. This contour or vector of the universe's creative process has a relationship with care (sorge) and is Burnside's locale for the 'I', phenomenologically bound or not.

#### I.A.2. Looking for New England

The appropriation of Romanticism by the Transcendentalist movement of the eighteen-thirties in New England developed an aesthetic model and intellectual spirit within a very new nation. Thus when Perry Miller emphasizes that Emerson's philosophy "reconciles the practical with the speculative process" (250) he is speaking on the synthesis of primitive unconsciousness and civilized self-consciousness.<sup>35</sup> This is set alongside the synthesis of revelation and reason, its effect is to localize the self vis-à-vis the non-self, whether that is a

---

<sup>35</sup> Anonymous [Emerson and Margaret Fuller (1810-1850)] "The Editors to the Reader," The Dial, 1.1 (1840): 1-4, 4; a phrase taken from Kant's sixteenth and final part of The Critique of Pure Reason (1781).

monotheistic creator, or an integral, historical context for the nation's identity, or a symbolized knowledge of God i.e. nature.

Lawrence Buell emphasizes the literary quality of Unitarian sermonising and the examination of inspiration as a "distrust of structured spiritual development" (Transcendentalism 277, 179). A world of guaranteed meaning being increasingly brought under scrutiny while also bringing into relief the idea that knowledge is humanly inscribed, are two attributes that inform Emerson's new testament -- the call for an original relation between man and environment as a means to fix disunity within man himself (Nature). He is Burnside's earliest American mentor. The Romantic problematic of creator versus free channel in the artist is given heightened linguistic and symbolic edge in this new epistemological aesthetic (Rotella), and it meets its match in the reflexive contemporary ecopoetic (Ricou, Bate). Scepticism regarding the imposition and construction of meaning in Rotella's sharply defined conceptual terrain rewrites American nature writing into a tradition of poetic thought that works across cultural materialism and Idealism, the oppositions of secular and sacred, and the complications of subject-object relations, phenomena and noumena, reason and intuition. It is the legacy of such thinking pressing upon and through the grammatical, conceptual, and categorical constraints that is an overt influence upon Burnside's poetic apparatus, which recalls the discovery of a "double-consciousness" (Emerson "The Transcendentalist", Collected 1: 213) and the lives and understanding of the soul (James Varieties 1902), particularly pronounced in MOT. I seek to clarify this in the remainder of this section before I turn to ideas of self-sufficiency and solitude (sec. II.) which are raised together to read doubleness in Burnside's early poetry (sec. III.)

### I.B. Precognition

Firstly, James McGonigal has understood the post-religious devices in Burnside as the "precognition and recovery" of aspects of Catholicism's "ideology of sanctity" ("Recusant Grace" 65). This is a significant theme prior to Burnside's dwelling emphasis. Secondly, for Rotella, Puritanism viewed nature as an immanent power of the transcendental, something that could be read by an elite and elect readership. Furthermore, Rotella's Stevens, a late years figure whose loss in the faith of God or nature as a source of the transcendent, signifies a post-Transcendentalist questioning of the authority of the experience of the transcendental through the act of creation. I place these two issues as implicit centres of gravity in my reading of the hinterland.

How creation has a history in Emerson's extension of the Puritan mind allows us to understand Burnside's use of Stevens -- a conflation of the late with the early Stevens: the voice of the disenfranchised and the voice posing the possibility of diffusing the inner self through a relationship with nature not God, a position I move to after qualifying the American position and Burnside's earlier work in this chapter. In Burnside it has the added problem of commuting world beyond the strictly anchored 'I'. Thus, McGonigal informs my conceptual reading of the early poetry (precognition) here, and my reading of SIF and ANS (recovery) in chapter three.

For McGonigal, the ideology is "as difficult to question as [to] ignore". This Catholic qualification reads "Two Saints" (Th), where the desire for the spiritual beneath the superstructure of the everyday outplays Burnside's move from his birthplace in Cowdenbeath, Scotland, to the mining town Corby in the English midlands, with understated disaffection. The dwelling place of the writer's first



primary school, Saint Brigid, symbol of the sacred fires of Ireland, is quashed by the English school, Saint Columba's High, which represents "Anglo-Saxon" materialism, that which cannot talk about the soul but would "be happier with poems about vacuum cleaners" (Herbert "Interview" 75, 79). This humorous aperture upon the need to connect to ritual and memory is turned into graven seriousness especially acute via the significance of Halloween. Burnside draws from Hallowtide rituals as symbolic cultural events. These suffered attack during the reformation, yet as Nicholas Rogers notes, despite Queen Elizabeth I removing the commemorative ceremony of the faithful departed from the litany in 1559, Scotland and Ireland enjoyed unchecked fire festivals into the seventeen century (20-30). They are not mere forms of ritual but events of resistance and sites of dissidence, one that forwards the producer over the consumer and suggests that the meaning of place is the product of the human relationships and history afforded by and constructed within the site. It enables a fresh view on the self/soul contingent/non-contingent issue.

McGonigal's reading is accurate and unyielding. A glimpse at one of five sonnets playing out Adamic naming, Grail narratives, the Green Man, the ploughshare, and the opposition of spring and winter in "The quest" (Th), suggests that the absent Christ within these motifs is indicated but overshadowed by the "dangers that attend visionary effort" ("Recusant Grace" 67). Following McGonigal, I would like to detail Burnside's secularised Catholicism within a post-Transcendentalist idiom.

I rise in the waxen dark. The snow  
 is steady and exact, with time enough  
 to fill the city...  
 But living has become a testament  
 to prey I did not take and ventures wrapped  
 in careful flesh. A fear of accidents;  
 new snowfalls leaving tripwires in my path,

the vertigo of finding my own depth. ("The quest" 4: 1-3, 10-14)

Here, the premise to be exact is forgiven (or ironized), for the darker energy such as the shadowy "tiger" (8) is allowed to flow. Steven's discovery through "inexactnesses" ("The Poem That Took The Place Of A Mountain" 11) is given new life in the sonnet's turn working in proximate relation to an idea of regret. This transforms the animal and primitive sense of the poem into a mode of conscious thought, the cost of putting "flesh" into feeling reflected in the precision of pentameter relinquishing the deeper, wider self. Burnside double binds the semantic space by using the word "prey" to highlight oppositional agency, yet when read in conjunction with "testament" to indicate a statement absent of (the presence of the) creator one reads a plea to an other. Therefore, the poem attempts to bridge a gap and offer more than artistic representation or completion, it forwards thinking as a step beyond precognition and wishes to recoil from this. With a stress on "wrapping" as reflexive allusion to textual event, one can read this running into the "fear" of materializing spirit without due care. Such practical reason (or blind faith), however, is held in balance by the arrest induced by the poem's wider self-reflexivity. The "waxen dark" does not collapse the divide suggested by the dichotomy running from human to animal and on into surface and depth, light and dark, presence and absence, but it operates in a separate space, a site of reflection only possible when material culture is not seen as running right through and across. There is a space, therefore, for human action or reason, willed dwelling over passivity/interfusion.

The poetic intelligence deconstructs opposition in reference to the luminous surface of night as a site of arising not decline; however, the bridge, if not a levelling of terms but a permanent faith, is resisted in as much as it is an *imagined* loss of

equilibrium that resonates in the final image. This arrives as a form of ownership in the use of possessive adjective ("my") but it arrives after the move from "I" to "living": as thus, one can read the non-contingent creative energy driven via temporality and interrelation dynamics: it is the crucial watermark to the sonnet series. This is a difficult semantic site to critically extrapolate, and it is a complex way of working out some of the problems Burnside wishes to resolve from his phenomenological influences. It is almost a private mind-game for the poet, almost slipping too much from the poetic sphere.

However, energies that interact with childhood sensibility, ancestral ghosts of nature's temples, and the entrance into language (or the sensibility before the world fractures into consciousness) are the very essence of Th. McGonigal reads two other dimensions in Burnside's early work: (i) how "the numinous must exist in some sort of tension with the numerate world" (68) (CK); and (ii) how the pursuit of the real self, the dark animal predator alive in the precinct of the undergrowth and the imagination, is challenged to surrender to "the meagre sanctuary of home" ("How morning sometimes works'" (14) FD). Are the three co-ordinates simply one: the absence-presence conundrum writ large? Or is Burnside offering self/soul dynamics conceived as a complement of the finite and timeless?

The iambics of the last three lines (above) offer little resistance to both these lines of inquiry yet do suggest the logos of pheno above all else. The use of plurals to effect ideas of chaos/contingency, weather, and a line of defence is matched by the mono-syllabic "fear" as traced echo in the couplet's line-ending half-rhyme "path" and "depth". These operate the flash-light upon Burnside's wading consciousness, which is left stranded in the open outwith the linguistic world and critically aware of its

constructions: it can be read as a form of trespass into nature's canvas. These constructions are its only defences or navigational devices; now naked and defenceless in the triggered spotlight the poem moves into tentative verse, attempting to pull back the contingent, human created interface and allow the world (or soul) to reveal itself. Listening closer one can almost hear the trepidation in Burnside's meter. While the first two feet of the line give stress across "vertigo" in its first and third syllables, it seems, however, caught by the pressure of the dying cadence and the last three syllables of "in my path" and "my own depth". Here, the alternation of "my" from unstressed to stressed ironically elevates the human and removes some strength from "depth" to the point that this last note pulls down the word it derives from. Turning "vertigo" into anapaest and lowering the height and radiance in song, this (as with the troubling sustained 'r' in "tripwires") is Burnside's emphasis upon the earthly and the unassured 'I', repeated throughout Th toward MOT. It operates to push open the space between spoken and unspoken, the mantra and spiritual fidelity of a shaman quality where, McGonigal argues, the poet can wander between "temporal gaps" opened up by speech and "learn to inhabit silence and white space, unpeopled or snowed-in places" (67). I read these as semantic gaps that the mind dares to bridge but cannot in the site of precognition. The poem's voice is one urgently wishing to commute this to readers; it is visualized in the poetic metaphor. The "waxen dusk", the dark of night before giving way to morning, is the site of potential awakening; it is a solitary's threshold and smooth, lustrous surface. Despite the connotation of the pallor of a corpse it emphasizes a closeness, which as patina is the gloss on the soul while also the ability to follow traces beneath what has been expressed as the "habitual sway" by Wordsworth ("Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood", 1803-6, 11: 5).

In Burnside's poem it is not the death of innocence but an unpeopled wider agency.

McGonigal has spotted the acute outposts of Burnside's solitary mapping: the hedges, kitchens, streams, and border towns that he is tasked to return from with findings and reap as sustenance for making home. Nevertheless, the textual manifestation -- although deemed from scientific analysis -- has detoured into negative theology where one is unable to speak of the divine, "where things are transposed into their own mirror images or anti-echoes" (69). This unease is derived from absence but I choose to read this exactly as McGonigal's reading of the word "Virgin", as pre-conceptual: thus, unfathomability or negativity is one that misses our Kantian and scientific categories and is alive to other epistemologies that play along the surface and feel that which operates underneath. This emphasis by Burnside's attention toward sacramentals and not the sacraments gives life again to the elements, the things not the ideas, which is, of course, an Americana in microcosm.

#### I.C. Another Dickinson

Burnside has spoken of deprivation in terms of social structures working to reduce spirit and offering life "as consumers, as members of the corporation and congregation"; poetry speaks of "the world elsewhere" available once actions are dispelled, "A naïve man's idea of possibility, which Emily Dickinson called 'a fairer house than Prose' ["I Dwell in Possibility" #657]"<sup>36</sup> (Funk 18, 19). Burnside's Dickinson is signalling impartiality and gentility, to which I would add unfinishing: an equitable quietness as open chamber to possibility. It is where the contingent self can meet the soul. Eleven years earlier Burnside offered an abandoned project, "Another

---

<sup>36</sup> Also "They shut me up in Prose" (#613).

Loneliness", leading from Dickinson's poem "There is another Loneliness" (#1116) as the end of an engagement with prose poems (Herbert interview 83-84). It illuminates Burnside's use of Dickinson to read contemporary American poetry and thus outlines the territory I am bridging between the New England mind and the contemporary ecopoetic.

Later, Burnside turns to Brigit Pegeen Kelly's poem, "Dead Doe" positing a physical and imaginary distance between human and non-human at an urban road-kill scene. Burnside reads the gap as "unbridgeable", for the fact that the bystanders fear a resurrection if they come into relation with death and the animal, or as the poet phrases it "presence" and "ghostly blossoming" that extends the deer's relation "spiritually and lyrically" to others (cited Burnside "Mind" 57-59). This is not phenomenological poetics but an emphasis on the non-contingent.

The need for contact through a reduction of ill-defined fear is a significant compound for Burnside (TGN, GS), yet his emphasis on how the poet sustains distance by refusing to push provisionality in the poem to a dead conclusion is telling. The "slant of light" (Dickinson #258) as mode of perception and keen positive panic envisions expectation -- in "Dead Doe", the soul -- in an "unanticipated form" (60); that is to say Dickinson affirms vitality via ambiguity in language and thought as a resistance to terminus. Apposite to Burnside's interest in terror, awe, and panic, this practice -- which can be translated and used as a phenomenological influence -- is an unwillingness to conform to preconditions; it delivers the gap or distance between things into a clearing for contemplation, and enables "certain" new formations in the world and mind. It also suggests fluidity and continual movement within inexactness: the right source of influence Burnside appears to seek.

In "There's a certain Slant of light" the example of a winter's

afternoon light as institutionalized oppression (for it gives without physical trace) provides "internal difference" as the site "where the Meanings, are", stressing existence outside epistemology and scripture but within internalized pain: what one feels in the mind is over and above what one can literally see (not sense) in the world. Marjorie Perloff reads both the personal pronoun in the poem as an ambiguity that urges the possibility of multiplicity, and reads the poet unable to "identify [the] free floating fear" but able to "describe *how it feels*" (39). This particular indeterminacy outplays a post-structuralist blind spot by reconfiguring negative poetics of cancellation or contradiction as "differential poetics" (49), as an order that "cannot be explained or understood" outside the poet's "inner most being" (38-39), a curiosity that qualifies the claim to anthropocentric lyricism by collapsing internal and external, which is further accentuated in the disorienting verse form:

When it comes, the Landscape listens --  
 Shadows -- hold their breath --  
 When it goes, 'tis like the Distance  
 On the look of Death --- (13-16)

Dickinson's gaps focus attention on the nameless and upon disjunction and rupture. They stress two factors. First, the insufficiency of language to capture the bonds (the conjunctions and prepositions) of continuity, by extension the nexal points of relations that are never limited by time or space. Second, the transitive pulsation of mind neither arrested nor enclosed -- as it would be by an anchored 'I' either in control or trapped by the Husserlian reduction (either epoché or eidectic) -- is one viewed in cross-section. The rhyming quatrains, as Perloff notes, have alternating lines of stress and irregular syllabic pattern (three and four feet lines; 7-5-7-5 and 8-6 counts), which enforce breathlessness in the first three stanzas' double-stressed line-endings and line-beginnings. In the final

stanza (above) the secondary stress on "landscape" differentiates itself from the shorter second line where breathlessness is now named and sustains its endnote over the cadence of the third line to hammer its rhyme with "Death". For Perloff, this breathlessness as with Dickinson's "blankness" effects "essentially congruent" meanings across the seemingly multiplicitious pronoun, "it" (40) rather than, Perloff clarifies, the Derridean lack of centre or the Deleuzian rhizome without origin or terminus (39). This emptiness enables a reading of death prefigured in the opening line's light. The congruence declares that death is already part of the process of light and enlightenment; it enfolds the premise and conclusion in one, which in turn, through the particular indeterminacy enables a view of the continuum without origin, a cyclical process constructed without falling back on the 'I' but indicating the self in the world. It is an alluring forebear to contemporary ecopoetics.

Dickinson's octet, "There is another Loneliness", speaks of a presence that is neither desired nor provided, "but nature, sometimes, sometimes thought" (5) that befalls and enriches beyond human comprehension and will, yet is part of the continuum across (or within) human and world. I have indicated this as a key motif to Burnside's notion of soul. Burnside uses this as an opening into the self as a haunted being in his series "Another Loneliness" as a version of Wordsworthian strangeness of the soul on the earth and an attempt to understand one's involvement with others. The eleven short prose sequences drive into a metamorphic flux of vignettes: "the way, in a folk tale, the actions of one life transform the shape of another"; "still communities among the firs"; "an off-season light on the teacups and pictures"; "fabled meetings"; the afterlife as "a memorised district of plum trees and fishmongers' shops"; and "the order of Sundays" (Herbert Interview 83-84). This is a vast array of transmutations through narrative and perspective alongside past



events formed tangibly into mental regulation. Does this propose exactly what a phenomenological influence might be for Burnside? Compressing this again, they read as the sometimes existent and sometimes thought: the contingent world and the contingent mind resident only in symmetry. The opening and closing statements operate on exactly this scale of double-consciousness:

You begin with the fear of dust, but summers accumulate and settle at the household's edge, in the stone out-rooms and moss-threaded walls: birds' nests; moleskins; shinbones stitched in grass. Slowly, you merge with home; slowly you become invisible. Leaf mould and fernseed drift across the floor, and fates are sealed, another kind of healing. (83)

Death in the opening lines of seasonal variation betokens healing as the enduring continuum; where this state of knowledge exists, the self dilutes in the manner that the edges of home dissolve into an identity equalized with place. Here mind is enfolded into place, but only through the promotion (even if it is the promotion of instability) of the subject; again interestingly this is written in the second person. It is dwelling mirrored in the inevitable meaninglessness and futility of life, which is rich:

The gift of the random: a private life, embedded in the silt of memory: a whiteness on the air, like lime or frost; damp fingerprints of anthracite and mud. How you live through these mystery years: a surprised participant, passing the same households of steam and linen, and meeting, day after day, those beings you once mistook for others, and now understand as echoes, figments, parsings of a self. (84)

Contingency, embeddedness, and traces written in drifting pools of locales for living forward notions of difference emerging into fluid spaces of unity and interdependence ("parsings"). Nature and mind work together to read the myth of fern seed as invisibility communicated to the elect, and to read anthracite as a stone endowing energy rather than lying inanimate. Burnside often pushes further

than his forbears, entering into the coordinates of flora and fauna within their ecologies and yet located via human technologies of names/taxonomy. Wrapped inside a sequence where home is offered to an open mind, the "echoes" and "figments" of nature "sometimes" is not dependent upon light, fable, and memory, but is exposed through attentiveness to all three -- the undercurrents and invisible energies in these and the world, the vast wealth afforded by the reduced 'I' and an expansive textual field. I see these as precursors to Burnside's poetics that adopts this metaphysical order but is tantalized by the necessity to deposit the grounded 'I', here made significant by the second person as a means to step outside of the self. The way the poet works this domain in his earlier poetry is more slight and relaxed, and perhaps makes better reading than that witnessed in later verse where it is terse and intense.

Dickinson's variant word-lists and dashes purport that words are not priceless; her resistance to (proto-Modernist) verbal autonomy (product) gives way to silent transport (process). While Dickinson questions the purpose of nature in which we dwell via her "Sublime... founded upon her unnamings of all our certitudes into so many blanks" (Bloom Western 308-09; cited Perloff 46), her dislocated Gnostic silence affords vision in darkness. Language that initiates the movement of thought to exist within nature does not limit word or world by remaining within thought's boundary alone. This is a *post*-phenomenological influence.

#### I.C.1. A New Outlook

Reading the New England outlook as one that viewed language as an organising force within the theology of the disinherited helps to understand the paradoxes and oppositional logic within Puritan thought. Calvinism's promise that signs of the divine exist on

different planes to the corporeal crystallized America's "embattled opposition" to (European) centres of worldly experience (Manning Puritan 1) and delineates a way of conceiving the American attitude to the outside and to the other. Consequently this leads to the notion of the division between God, man, nature, and man located within consciousness of sin. This appeared first to Puritans as a structuring principle and the justification for the sentence of reprobation and the arbitrary nature of grace for the elect.

The influence of Coleridge upon Emerson where reason and understanding are differentiated in terms of faith (inward vision) and reason (rationalism), respectively, translates into thought as the possibility of perception with an emphasis "upon [a] beneficent, all-pervasive, and self-regulatory moral law" (Milder 103).<sup>37</sup> The "wider self" qualifies Emerson's solipsistic man as law unto himself (James Varieties 405). I read a certain level of correspondence between James and Emerson; however, I do not follow the trend in scholarship outlined by Bense that reads Emerson as post-Idealist. Bense articulates the distinction between James and Emerson, most especially the human capacity to see absolute truth and the eternal (divine) within the instant in Emerson as contradiction to the Jamesian notion of order always being in the process of making (366-367) and pluralism (375). However, the cosmic soul operating outside the individual is read by Emerson as an illimitable "universal" mind of which man is a temporal incarnation ("History", 1841). Perhaps this is the second phenomenological aspect of Burnside's poetics of self and soul. If so, as the deep background power that resists possession, it abolishes time and space, and offers the site in which

---

<sup>37</sup> Emerson's reading of Thomas Carlyle's (1795-1881) Aids to Reflection (1825) and "State of German Literature" (1827) is central here (Milder 103); so too "Sign of the Times" (1829) and Sartor Resartus (1833-34). Also see Sanja Sostaric, Coleridge and Emerson: A Complex Affinity (Dissertation.com, 2003); Marx Garden (170-179); cf. p. 76 n. 26.

"the subject and the object are one" ("The Over-Soul", 1841, Collected 2: 160). Emerson's temporal incarnation of the non-contingent relates to James' uniform religious deliverance consisting of "uneasiness" and its "solution" (Varieties 400). This provides an almost Arminianist qualification to the ego, the Copernican astronomy overriding the Ptolemaic world as mere resource for education of the private individual (Milder 111) offering man as part of the stream whose source is hidden. In addition to being precursor to the Heideggerian epigraph to my thesis, this provides an ecologically sound notion of self.

#### I.C.2. Wonder

The marginalized wonder of the everyday and the use of customs provide the conceptual starting point for Burnside's third volume, FD; it represents Wordsworth's "blessed mood" where the human blood and frame is "suspended", where "we are laid asleep" and "become a living soul" ("Lines Composed..." 41-46). This position is an incredible development from the running 'r' of "hear" and "repose" echoed by "orchard" and "groves"; a world as yet "unripe" but almost silently transforming "copses" to make 'corpses', drawing the underwood further down into notions of mortality (2-15) but later blossoming from this knowledge. Rather than an indifferent alveolar trill, this is perhaps dialectical: the Lancastrian northern emphasis echoing lowland Scots "ruggedness" over the sylvan (Bate Romantic 27). Across sound and sense as one it is the determination of the way one relates to the world, the temporal *comportment* of phenomenological intentionality (verhalten) which is the intertwining of human and world in location prior to objective positing or subjective perspectivism. This indigenous hinterland to Burnside's precognition touchstone resists prescribed signs and is witnessed in

human song. I see this repeated in a distinctly different poem:

I dream of the silence  
the day before Adam came  
to name the animals,

the gold skins newly dropped  
from God's bright fingers, still  
implicit with the light.

A day like this, perhaps:  
a winter whiteness  
haunting the creation,

as we are sometimes  
haunted by the space  
we fill, or by the forms

we might have known  
before the names,  
beyond the gloss of things. ("Septuagesima")

As the lead poem to FD, this is charged with the claim for an authentic mood finding the mystical in the quotidian and the spiritual in the customary within a pragmatic premise that leads from Heideggerian "saying-gathering" (Being 30-31); it is perhaps one of the most simple poems, intentionally so. "Septuagesima" also offers a view of the artist, in George Santayana's words "as a dreamer consenting to dream of the actual world" (Life 39) -- the view of the artist pushing against the pressure of reality like Stevens, but the application of art by discipline heralding intuition that represents actuality, and automatism over spontaneity i.e. being pulled by the non-contingent rather than asserting self. Burnside uses this collection to show how language is grounded in the body, in epistemic action (knowledge and acknowledgement), and in the mind; we read the behavioural environment as source and site of language, existence, and dream. "Septuagesima", therefore, can be read as a poem delivering the need to understand the footprint of the human by offering the site of origin, "winter whiteness", a double haunting of seasonal repetition evoking the possibility for creative relations

upon a blank canvas. This delineates that which operates before and underneath our "creation" and forwards the failure to question how knowledge is structured, or moreover, how structures come into being and mutate through time. For Burnside, this applies to the creation or emergence of self *and* text.

Lines from the Spanish poet exiled in America, Jorge Guillen, preface "Septuagesima": "Nombres. Estan sobre la patina de las cosas" ("Names: they skate on the surface of things"). While reticent to name, this poem recalls Emerson's resistance to Idealism in "Experience" (1844), to reduce intellectualism and calculation as a means to live in the moment and by impulse, following the play of the moment and crest of a deeper force: "to skate well on [surfaces]" (Collected 3: 35). As an acceptance of our inability to penetrate the hidden, it suggests an element of purchase or embeddedness in the flux of the world once dispatched into freedom that abides outside the life-form, (34); it follows Emerson's (Jamesian) image of the bird in perpetual movement between boughs and brings self-soul couplings into macro perspective. To Emerson this is the radically spontaneous and disorganized "practical power" (49) that genius must shape. To James, it is the deconstruction of concepts as a means to open up the unfathomable. By this he means the Pragmatist condition to understand that which we can only name as "the thickness of those passing moments", for we fly over surfaces and sometimes rest, reading the laws of nature as if on skates, finding "only coexistencies and successions" ("Bergson and His Critique of Intellectualism", 1908, Pluralistic 112). To Frost it meant more than stasis or recovery of old ground but superfluity of the non-egotistical, "the mind skating ideas round itself as it *moves forward*" (my emphasis; cited Poirier Poetry 64).<sup>38</sup> I propose that

---

<sup>38</sup> Robert Frost, letter to Louis Untermeyer, 10 Mar. 1924, Collected

this is the mind behind Burnside's project to rework poems and to create an ever elaborating poem: it is radical as skating tempers the gravity of absolutes and is actively self-critical and circular, a rigorous energy motivated by non-conformity. The logic behind this is to illuminate the possibility of the artwork as a semantic offering that opens up thought beyond representational structures or the ontic determinations of ontology (i.e. real as opposed to phenomenological), the showing outwith the logic of fixed forms while provoking non-deterministic models of thinking to reconsider textual accidents as the site of meaning (as with Bate's conception of Heideggerian ecopoetics, Song 262). It is a push forwards and it can be missed if seen as only the mental stasis and preoccupation within the redrafting of earlier works. For the poet, knowing how things are in the world and celebrating the mystical fact that the world exists resists the "new fascism" of contemporary hegemony manifesting in a corporatized society of "the atomic clock" (Burnside "Science" 93, 100). As we shall find when reading TLT, it is a summoning of history within silence that operates "beyond the gloss of things" ("Septuagesima"), yet with non-appropriative purchase. One needs to reads Burnside's solitary with this in mind.

## II. Self-Sufficiency

Burnside's solitary in his first four collections can be read in light of the titanic figures of Wordsworth and Emerson. Bate reads through abstract intelligence in Wordsworth towards an active principle while also finding a radical humanism of a working paradise or pastoral built through relation and involvement, as in book eight of The Prelude (Romantic 22-29). I apply this throughout my reading of Burnside, but first, to recap how I arrived at this imperative to

outline solitude.

Manning reads a gulf in mindsets between Puritan and Anglican, the "alienated" and "egocentric" pitted against "the recognition of a centre" beyond the self (above) without a consideration of communal materialism. Burnside's poetic line uncovers the gaps between these two positions by following a breakdown in confidence witnessed in American post-Puritan writers, read in retrospect as solipsism that rejects epistemology i.e. a mind that refuses to see outside the self and takes the loss of the word of God as an inability to achieve spiritual re-generation: a position quashed by Dickinson and flatly ignored by Stevens. The failure to comprehend the world and its vastness witnessed in the frontier as a penetration into the other is one fuelled by paranoia. Herein the dichotomy of grace and domination where the self oscillates between self-assertion and ratiocination and with self-abnegation before authority (Manning Puritan; Miller, P.) provides an initial sketch into the background of Transcendentalism and Emerson's ethos of self-reliance as liberation from alienation. I am outlining the individual mind in this chapter yet develop this ground in chapter three with specific attention to breakdown, self-assertion and healing in SIF and ANS.

#### II.A. The Excursion into Solitude

"Self-Reliance" (1841) to Emerson spells letting "the subject be what it may" (Collected 2: 27), which is the first step to universalise deep private feelings upon humanity and is the manifestation of realizing that imitation and envy are valueless in comparison to self-expression. This model is at the heart of the Transcendentalist vision of the self as "redeemers and benefactors, pious aspirants to be noble clay plastic under the Almighty effort", rejecting the conspiracy of society to repress while advancing through "Chaos and



the Dark" (28). This has strong echoes with Heideggerian 'letting be' as indicated above and articulated by Zimmerman and Haar. This American view finds its later expression in Walt Whitman's "free channel" ("Preface" 496) and in Santayana as "inner attention" or spirit that "suffuses all actual feelings and thoughts... so conceived is not an individual but a category: it is life in so far as it reaches pure actuality in feeling or thought" (Domination 55). This latter fragmentation could represent the phenomenological critique of human construction by forwarding elements in description before offering a theory of causation. However, there is a desire to push beyond this position both in the American hinterland and in Burnside if not in Heidegger.

"Spontaneity" and "Instinct", the essence of the aboriginal self and primary wisdom, "Intuition", is the deep source or "common origin" to which the independence of solitude and self-reinforcement lead (Emerson Collected 2: 37). However, Emerson writes that it is impossible to interpose calculations of the relations between the soul and the divine despite these modalities, for "its presence or its absence is all we can affirm" (37). An essential qualification to liberal freedom is the following allowance: "prayer as a means to effect a private end, is theft and meanness. It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness"; this unity is to be found in our (unaided) actions (44). It proposes that freedom is not the ability to will whatever one chooses, but because what we do affects what we are and how we can be, rather than unchecked self-assertion freedom is an understanding of our actions within a larger fold and through forms of relinquishment. I differentiate the Emersonian positive dialectic of co-creation that dissolves the non-identity problematic from the thoroughly Romantic notion of freedom that is challenged by later interpretations of Emerson, for its emphasis on living wholly from within and positing the integrity of the mind as

the only sacred thing. Again, thought-in-action is forwarded as poetic and philosophical forebear to the contemporary ecopoetic.

#### II.A.1. The Wordsworthian Qualification.

The Excursion (1814) reads animation between "all things" (9: 5), a statement toward the end of the poem upon an active principle derived from an exploration of three characters, representing mind and soul in development. Wordsworth's attention upon the Solitary as a double symbol of early youth and reflective consciousness, posits the union of endurance and despondency corrected via the realization of inner psychological reality, a widened version of self-reliance. As Bushell has argued, this is enabled only through the interplay of narrative voices, the being-with-others and consolidated recollection of tales from across multiple personas, which draws the mind to itself: it is not an isolated solipsism but one considered embedded in context of action and interaction, narrative and response.

Bushell has noted that the second narrative of the Solitary is the sole first person pronoun of the whole poem; it is strikingly distinctive and a remarkably significant device for self-exploration via the loss or reduction (or remove) of converting or translating meaning into narrative in isolation, within the larger consideration of integrating death into life and education over instruction. For the Wanderer and most especially the Pastor (representing storied contemplation of the spatial distribution between churchyard and valley, a geographic poetic), memory is a device that brings reassurance and affirmation, whereas the Solitary's memory is dysfunctional. His narrative is primarily a treatise on the limitations of memory and the inability of imagination to recreate identities through stories (Bushell 229-30). This presents a larger treatise of continually shifting centres of consciousness that mark

the unfolding of Wordsworth's text as an indeterminate but active, living event.

Bushell's Iserian participative reader model is complemented to a degree by Hickey who reads a shift of the poet's role from autobiography (The Prelude) to the writing of a community (149), but with greater emphasis on voice and communality than Hickey's ventriloquism. Thus, despite memory foregrounding an impasse between world and experience, Wordsworth's Solitary of The Excursion is not a spectator of nature-as-object but as with the consolidation of diverse perspectives, he is immersed in the form of revelation derived through nature-as-process. It is an influence Burnside wishes to harness into his self-soul dynamic turned transparent. Wordsworth's despondent declaration: "I called on dreams and visions, to disclose / That which is veiled from waking thought (3.686-87)" is an attempt at making himself part of the scene that he encounters; here, to negate the frame of the dispossession of life that once fuelled the past. The death of his family suggests recovery through the effort drawing from memory and imagination but also the education from solitude (385-410, 776-845) as a means to take the oppositional "I" out of the role of finding and from authority. This shifts monologue to the representation of others and the questioning of the inadequacy of some responses to world. It comes in the correction of despondency in the next book:

I have seen  
 A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract  
 Of inland ground, applying to his ear  
 The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;  
 To which, in silence hushed, his very soul  
 Listened intensely; and his countenance soon  
 Brightened with joy for from within were heard  
 Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed  
 Mysterious union with its native sea.  
 Even such a shell the universe itself  
 Is to the ear of Faith. (4: 1132-1142)

The progression in 'countenance' is particularly acute for the word not only commutes bearing, but suggests comportment (intentionality) and is specifically used when designating the behaviour of two people towards each other; as an intransitive verb it is underlined by ideas of pretence and making that unconceal the "within" of the boy. This is the faith in the world of bi-direction manifesting in specific moments in time.

Moreover, assonance and vowel softening across alliterative steps expand and contract poetic breath in a single move. "Curious" and "countenance" work in the fashion that "murmurings" and "mysterious" are coupled as with "union and universe" but the running on of vowel sound in "curious" ('u') into "murmurings" ('u', 'i') and "mysterious" ('i') brings these ideas into greater relation and act as shaping sonic element to the larger motif of cosmic union. As poetic device the soundscape spreads words into a larger site of play while also contracting each element into a tighter mould -- an undulating modal breath in itself that is experienced as spatially elasticized and entangled grammar simultaneously. This duality plays across "silence" as the context for a vision which has "listened" or where "faith" is begot by curiosity; it finds its post-Transcendentalist expression in the "momentary and eternal nature of durée" (Burnside "Science" 101).

For Burnside, the use of the solitary is a method for exploring the limits of subjectivity and its interface with or creation of soul. This operates as self-examination, not through the assimilation of stories of others as a continual process (Bushell 104) but through an interdependence drawn from memory, dreams, and presences of others. These are seen as twins to one self or "parsings" (above, i.e. an instance of resolution into component parts) brokered as living events united through repetition and the collapsing of the pronominal

frame -- as such, Bushell's dialogic model applies. Burnside wishes to develop Wordsworth's remarkable listening self of "inland" "joy" wedded to the material world as a means to collapse, or speed along, the phenomenological imperative. Thus in technique, the embedded narrative of others is given to an extended communion between selves, often the work of mind running across disparate selves in time and synthesizing these to a countenance of a singular yet schizophrenic 'I'. As Abrams notes, in Wordsworth evoked materials are brought together under different laws for different purposes (Mirror 181); for Nasir, The Excursion demonstrates this principle of the imagination "to modify, to create, to associate" (34-36). Communion, for Lyon, is the faculty of passionate intuition by which the eternal and infinite truth is apprehended, yet this lies within the mind, nature's active principle, and the transcendental realm. Bushell, to a larger degree than Hickey, brings this faculty (or debate) back home, from mind to community. Burnside forces these into a singular vice of self accumulation.

These first two elements universalised by Lyon could be used to understand the early Burnsidean solitary and most accurately to handle the pronoun in MOT where each instance reads not as an individual subject but as mutual subjects. Thus mutability not fixed monologue:

and someone is having the dream  
 I had for weeks: out walking on the beach  
 I lifted the pebble and split it  
 open, like an apricot, to find  
 a live child hatched in the stone ("The Myth of the Twin (1)" 6-10)

While Wordsworth's Solitary underlines a conflict between normal consciousness and solipsistic determination not to yield to it, the bond with a benevolent providence carries into Burnside's solitary, who as with Wordsworth's, is tasked with strengthening not overriding

this bond and thus develops self from the co-existence of two perspectives offered as the site of externalization. A godly faculty that can be exercised, is in Burnside's vision, a temporal and spiritual link between man and divine. Is this an attempt to undermine the individual and open up a theory of essences by disputing the spatio-temporal individual existing in one place at any one time, something underlined by the notion of the double, and the extension of self into separate identities in time and states of waking life?

This is tricky. The poem of the dream of another as self-same is a promotion of Husserlian eidetic reduction. Here, an essence designated validity as an element of an individuum (the dream story) is then put into an idea (the reflection of the dream as energy state within the pebble-apricot) and thus meets this particular phenomenological paradigm. Evolving consonance blurs "dream", "beach", then "hatched", as a movement from mind to world to new origin; it is definition through re-evaluation and yet threaded with resemblance ('I' and sound), highlighting degrees of egotism across the poetic space and running through any bracketing or conceptualizing. As the Solitary of The Excursion has sorrow consoled, Burnside's fruitful simile creates the image of two perfect halves deconstructing to formulate a third term, or other life form and new possibility beyond the pronominal frame. I chose to read this passage with a mind to relinquishing auto-insemination and elevating the poetics of reintegration as a form of dialogue, thus the Cartesian foundation is adumbrated by the human act (to be) understood as one of free being motivated by *reasoning its relation to others*. I urge the reader to bear this conclusion in mind as the thesis moves forward.

Burnside's child-man and pebble-beach scene creates an image that reflects upon the science of man's ability to open up the atom and

find complexity on the scale of a solar system. Moreover, within a poem about a dream and the shores of consciousness -- disparate perspectives and points of relation to self -- imagery is no longer fitted to circumstance as with a self-reflexive phenomenological field positing mind in relief to objects under scrutiny. Yet imagery does render an emotive state -- but what is this? Firstly, one can read neither a mechanistic universe marking time nor an eternal recurrence of the same, but the morphing fruit-child suggests a dynamic force unlimited by concept and open to reasoning. Secondly, reading this as metaphor, the dream is a force striving forwards towards vitality: a new life-form provided via the élan vital. As a representation of the lyricist's aspiration this transforms the moment of recognition and kinship (looking at the pebble and finding a self, not anti-self) into completion: now this once absent life-form has a life of its own and it is to this phantom that we connect. An identity has been established through the co-creation of self and soul. It is the "sub-soil" (Bergson Dreams) of a creative space fleshed out into imagery. I find a reading of an encased and hidden image inflected into discovery as a birth process, which could be read as the internal manifestation of the dialectic of the phenomenological that must reach beyond the mind for its measurements and its language. While this is distinct from Wordsworth's Solitary healed through intercourse, again the ecological potential resonates with the Romantic notion of fulfilling human spirit by entering into relation; it also liberates human from world without transcending world.

Riddel explains that this model relates to the notion of advance by habit or repetition forwarded by the Harvard logician C.S. Peirce (Purloined 88). It is thus incompleteness -- Wordsworthian "thoughtless impulse" (MS.B 289) -- that is forwarded, that which

Bergson reading James calls "an invention" (Mind 255-256).<sup>39</sup> Thus, Burnside's metalepsis commonly deployed as trope for organic nature not yet realized (Adorno) has two functions here. First, this development runs across repeated sightings of grandfather and father, and different ages of the autobiographical "I", and within a conflation of these two to enable a view of a schizophrenic and fragmented identity yet one borne through an extended vision of time and existential interdependency (self and world/soul). Second, it recalls Gaston Bachelard's writing of the shell as a space of inhabitation and an acceptance of solitude, reflecting literally on the performance staged in appropriated narrative. Moreover, this reverberates into the metaphor of the immensity of world that is not in miniature, here becoming available in all its glory as an original dwelling enclosing well-being and most pertinently as a slow formation (Bachelard 4; 105-6). Read together as mirrors that unfold upon themselves yet extend the self through time as an inland faith, it can be read not as the lamp or the constitutive autonomous self but a recuperative force spilling over the boundary of internal/external, which bears an analogy to an organic yet determined nature through dissolving (but also in thanks to) the phenomenological aspect of the lyric.

The mature mind celebrated in Wordsworth's second book of The Excursion can read "the hand / Of silence" (711-12) and spiritual presences as "mute Agents" (724). This is bequeathed at the very end of Burnside's solipsistic journey in the final poem of MOT. Here, Burnside's "deep silences" are not disengaged, but are framed by a deep focus where "something" is denotative. This resists the charge of indeterminacy, and as McGonigal argues, is an "after-echo or quasi

---

<sup>39</sup> See p. 225, n. 51.



radioactive half-life of early experiences" ("Analysing" 23). This is the domain of poetry that twins not solely contrary selves but also "underworld and modern world, past within present, natural and supernatural presences" (25). Agency within and beyond self:

There is that perfume in the shade  
that is almost viburnum,  
traces of snow and water in the light,  
a blankness along the canal  
that waits to be filled

and, given the silence, given the promise of frost,  
I might have welcomed this as something else:  
the taste of windfalls moving on the stream  
a faint god's partial emergence  
through willow and alder. ("The Solitary in Autumn" 6-15)

Burnside's olfactory mnemonic coupled to space transforms Dickinson's slant of light into a creaturely navigation of domain with Shellyan inquisition. This is centred within circular time where beginning and end are one (as with Dickinson) via an emphasis on unfinished process "the promise of frost" followed by a shift in tense through unrealized potential in the following line, turning event into memory in one poetic moment. This collocation of future and past amplifies into a larger sense of time given by the symbolic qualities of the trees. Both willow and alder require wet areas for growth, a more quiet metaphor than that of 'God', alluding to the ultimate manifestation of a continuous thing, here to the hydrologic cycle and to the affordance of (pre-human) sub-aqueous life forms, the slow forming genesis from drifting planktonic life. Moreover, willow symbolizes grief for unrequited or lost love. As the site of only a "faint" god that is "partial" (as the identification offered is one being "almost") it suggests uncertainty or unfulfilment in the trace, an idea of progenitorship that fills the silence delicately in mourning. The post-origin identity that instils significance rather than emphasizes absence is a particular (human) voice. In conclusion

the Wordsworthian dimension emphasizes exchange, the Burnsidean promotes creative inconstancy.

### III. Poems

I elect a few poems and their historical forebears to emphasize the post-Transcendentalist pragmatic view of "double-consciousness" secularized as post-phenomenological negative poetics of self and soul.

#### III.A. The Calendar as Grammar

"All Hallows at Newbrook Farm" (Th) attends to the markers of our calendars and the natural "season of hunger" (11), "outside" and "beyond" (8-9) the empirical to define the voice demarcating terrain beyond the binary of life-death through the progression of the soul, given significant expression in the ritual markings of "Halloween" in the close of the poetics of solipsism.

Halloween is the ingathering and reorganizing of the community and marks the observance of human dependence upon the land and its gifts. Without a direct relation to the Latinate feast Día de Muertos, the Celtic pagan festival Samhain registers kinship with the earth and the souls of the departed within the festival's zone of withdrawal from the laws of time and space. The gateway is not only from summer to winter, but for the dead to the land of the living.<sup>40</sup> Burnside's ecological mind, poetic saying and full speech, is pregnant with the gateway in MOT and his post-Wordsworthian inconstancy:

I have peeled the bark from the tree

---

<sup>40</sup> See James George Frazer The Golden Bough (London: Macmillan, 1890), J.A. MacCulloch The Religion of the Ancient Celts (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1911), and Edward Muir Ritual in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997).

to smell its ghost,  
 and walked the boundaries of ice and bone  
 where the parish returns to itself  
 in a flurry of snow;

I have learned to observe the winters:  
 the apples that fall for days  
 in abandoned yards,  
 the fernwork of ice and water  
 sealing me up with the dead  
 in misted rooms

as I come to define my place:  
 barn owls hunting in pairs along the hedge,  
 the smell of frost on the linen, the smell of leaves  
 and the whiteness that breeds in the flaked  
 leaf mould, like the first elusive threads  
 of unmade souls.

The village is over there, in a pool of bells,  
 and beyond that nothing,  
 or only the other versions of myself,  
 familiar and strange, and swaddled in their time  
 as I am, standing out beneath the moon  
 or stooping to a clutch of twigs and straw  
 to breathe a little life into the fire. ("Halloween")

Clarity and assertion in the tuning fork and late Yeatsian declarative "as I come to define my place" foregrounds time in a poem that shifts across the senses (visual to olfactory and touch) suggesting in the multisensual that nature is not framed for us, and writing a deeper connection to the place (in the shift from 'I'). It is an example of Thoreauvian living, a deliberate stance that is more A.R. Ammons than Jamie's invisibility ("The Tree House", The Tree House). Moreover, topos is mapped via the peal of bells in the distance suggesting displacement and worlds existing beyond direct involvement at the edge of consciousness. Both represent levels of enaction: formerly bodily ethics and laws of physics (the first two stanzas), latterly memory and fire (stanzas three and four).

Within this dual and conflicting charge the elasticized motion of the poem gathers text into a mythological landscape of the passing natural rhythms of planetary life held in suspension (as with "Blackbird" TLT, 36). It is the finest early example of Burnside's vision of the lyric as aperture into the timelessness of place

through attention to a specific moment, a paradox that delivers the "standstill of eternity" where there is no distinction between the living and the dead ("Place"): it is his first significant achievement of fusing self and soul via the transparent 'I'.

The now timeless (through various repetitions) and final image of an anonymous figure overlooking the landscape caught in a sense of doubleness, moves to light a fire, to ignite thinking and the power of gods within this stillness. This is a vision of self viewed outside of self and it marks a double gathering or two-fold movement. Firstly, the connection between the present living voice and the double of the late grandfather (the significant paternal figure in the volume, recreated as a twin in the figure of the poet), represents a marriage of minds. It is not unlike Bishop's version of Carlos Drummond de Andrade's "Family Portrait" (Translations in Complete) whose multiplication of "living and dead relations" (48), perceives "the strange idea of family / / travelling through the flesh" (53-55). When read as twin to Burnside's father (AL) and to the ghostly, skeletal figure viewed on a November evening ("Lazarus" 95) -- all explicit references to this image of lighting the fire -- it acts as mental grammar to diverse selfhood (the one passed into many gathered back into union). Secondly, this fusion is exaggerated by bodily action and is extended into the gathering of human and natural realms. The choice of phrase for the clutch of twigs is not only synonymous with the collective noun but is a shift into a verb, which in effect enlarges the sense of happening and making within the poem, in turn echoing the principle of becoming. The present tense in "sealing" is emphasized over the past-perfect "swaddled" to promote the notion of authentication slightly more than the more quiet metaphor of (Christian) binding; it is noticeable as is the prolepsis of TAD attributes, namely shepherded being and free individualism. Furthermore, Burnside kindling the fire that is the

responsibility of the adult male during Samhain brings into relief physical involvement in the world derived from our mental attunement to a larger principle of evolution within things. This intuition is inward in early Burnside yet enveloped by larger presences. I recall American influences to finalize thoughts on this poetic that have been discovered in Burnside's work.

### III.A.1. New England Perception

Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost exemplify the three levels of perception New England poetry incorporates: (i) the provincial; (ii) the mode of instruction; (iii) and the poetically inward. That the human is transparent and nature is of the divine is a thought that runs from Jonathan Edwards into Emerson; Dickinson's yearning for grace and Frost's penetration of the veil, however, are written against theology and science, crucially as "scenic moments" praised for what they are (Mulder 552). Most specifically in Frost, the pastoral is an isolated realm that knowingly points beyond its own limited world turning the poem into an initiation of the transgression of borders one must make to create relations in the world.<sup>41</sup> It is the signal most complete model for reading early Burnside. Frost and Dickinson are compatriots in their use of conversation as context, and of local colour; these methods relinquish pictorial poetics for an emphasis on *process* where, in both poets, the provincial becomes instructive (when the object invested with moral value transforms sight to insight). This shifts to the third degree of perception, inwardness, when slant and cautionary scepticism probe hauntings and double-consciousness to find (in the immanence of textual correspondence) personal/human revelation and the indifference of nature. Brought together these

---

<sup>41</sup> Also Lynen's The Pastoral Art of Robert Frost (1960).

deliver the 'I' into acceptance that unreason cannot be known. The poetry suggests that Burnside wishes to push this position through from his own experience of craftwork.

As a means to do this in CK Burnside is keen to analyze our ordinary homes of thought and our fictions, or Idealist purposes; thus, in self-reflective fashion he must forward process:

the way a memory runs on  
 from somewhere unreclected  
 and vast,  
 how you always imagine the suburbs  
 busy with bonfires and hymns  
 at Halloween,  
 when every house is lit, a déjà-vu,  
 leading through street names and churchyards  
 from nothing to nothing. ("Source Code" 6-14)

Again, as identified in chapter one, "the way" draws attention to how the process comes into being and how the process exists to human minds -- of pathways (directions) and existential phenomena (how things are and can be). The mind here extends into world, which is central to the early solipsism. Resident in the companion section "Chain Work", this poem alludes to the raw computer program that is not able to interface with other systems or objects until it has run through a translator, or compiler. Moreover, "Chain Work" itself, while foregrounding writing as performance, that of language referring to itself in a chain of signifiers drawing upon difference in the semiotic system for value, takes its name from the lexis of information technology, too, specifically software engineering where programmes are combined to operate together yet across a domain via distinct and individually task-specific modules. Placed together, one can read a model of object engineering advanced as middle ground: it is a new statement of the potential of phenomenological poetics that is set in relation to proprioception, or self-reflection upon the foregrounding of description as world comes to language.

Moreover, as a model of relations and identity this system correlates to the co-creative identity discovered in "Myth of the Twin" (1) above. Rather than either an enclosed and solipsistic or non-portable language, or an embedded, non-detachable involved language, this explication of the raw and the embedded replays Heidegger's promotion of the sense of ready-to-hand, objects involved in praxis, energy in play and motion. Moreover, in Burnside it has consonance with a central mind that is determined to connect to the infinite or ineffable while remaining true to the finite and the historically material -- thus, in abstraction, bringing the dynamics of the "Myth of the Twin" (1) poem into relation with "Halloween". To further emphasize the debt to the American influence, I argue that the proximity of these poems to Idealist completion of nature's forms and the traditionally conceived phenomenological stance is qualified by a particular compact with nature.

### III.B. The Frostian Compact

Stopping short in the poetry of Edward Thomas connects the macrocosm to the microcosm. His love of detail much like that of John Clare prefigures Frost's poetic sensibility. Thomas is a fascinating element to Frost's Anglo-Americanism, providing an edge to his Emersonian Romanticism and mixing the neo-classical rationalist qualification with elements of the British Georgian. What Abrams coined "infinite aims for finite man" ("English" 56-58) alongside the truth of human experience through revelatory realism, are modernized into an independent poetic or "particular angle of vision" (Simon 132); it is a conglomerate that echoes Burnside's self-soul inquiry and his accommodation of Dickens' lyrical forte. Thomas' Clare is similar to Stevens' John Crowe Ransom (Opus) -- a combination of peasant and adventurer that denies a split between literate and

illiterate sensibilities (Bate, above). Most centrally for Thomas, Clare betokens an ideal poet whose use of words allows things to "play on" ("Feminine Influence on the Poets" 1910, Thomas 30).

This approach neither turns world into representation nor uses language bent toward correspondence but offers a site where words "half-wild and imperfectly domesticated" are sewn into the substance of emotion and perception registered during the moment of the experience to renew "what had before lain dark and unapparent", that which phenomenology cannot access. It is that site which Bate envisions as the strict role of the Heideggerian ecopoetic to uncover and bring forth (Song 260). Heaney disregards the distinction between the lived, illiterate sensibility, and the learned consciousness, for his poetics are tuned to the marriage of "the geographical country and the country of the mind" ("The Sense of Place" 1977, Preoccupations 131). For Thomas, this is delivered as experience within the aesthetic via common speech and straightforward poetics. Burnside would accept Heaney's reading of religious from relegare -- to bind fast (133), and is more successful in mapping the two conditions in "Halloween" than in "September evening; deer at Big Basin", for the vestigial promotion of the law of feeling in the former over the phenomenologically acute story-telling of law of mind. However, I do see this latter poem crystallize some issues that my thesis has raised thus far, and I shall return to it. While Wordsworth would democratize this law of mind through communion, Burnside is attempting to place it in a pattern of myth and symbol both personal and universal. Where Wordsworth would contemplate, Frost sympathises and thus draws the subject closer to the referent; an engagement that Thomas saw at the core of Frost, and called, "natural delicacy": an attention not to overwork the poem (128, 130). These preoccupations inform my readings by assisting my understanding of the way Burnside's lyric is particularly configured.



In Burnside, the site of civilization is liberated into "nothing",  
as above:

The village is over there, in a pool of bells,  
and beyond that nothing,  
or only the other versions of myself,  
familiar and strange, and swaddled in their time  
as I am, standing out beneath the moon,  
or stooping to a clutch of twigs and straw  
to breathe a little life into the fire. ("Halloween" 18-24)

Indicating home "over there" draws from pragmatic linguistics. Deixis is a process whereby an expression is reliant upon context; the village composed by definite article is neither nostalgic site of origin (Oliver Goldsmith's "Deserted Village", 1770), or negative view of rustic life (George Crabbe's "The Village", 1783) but in spatial relation it is the relief from which the viewpoint declares itself against. Collocating this to 'nothing' suggests potential and primordial elements to the construction before entrance into mind or culture, symbolized by the Promethean impulse. As mechanism that affords the distinction between 'now', 'then', and 'here', place written as "there" is not only geographical site but also Burnside's comportment *and* intention where experience lies allusively within imagination, memory, and presence. In TGN, the boundaries between "here" and "there" are conceptually forced; in MOT these co-ordinates marry fragmented time, and as context for other possible selves, they conflate future, past, and present. Here, Burnside's allusion to the day following All Saints' Day where prayer for souls in purgatory symbolized by the ringing of church bells, is an absence that is made into an image of music for others coming from an expanded selfhood and a contrast of human symbolic noise with earth's silence. Deixis locates the entity in space and time but is embedded by Burnside into social context to provide a culturescape rather than attempt mimesis: the phenomenological voice is dropped as history takes precedence

over nature. Later, in "The Solitary in Autumn", darkness "recovers" a garden's creatures to replay this as the self-regulation of nature within an unauthorized delicacy; this move could be viewed as a development of bio-geographic mapping of terrain (via deixis) into an ecological mapping of interactions. This cannot be resolved by this thesis but I stress that it is driven by the certain compact that I further qualify here.

### III.B.1. Frostian Politics

The Frostian moment in A Boy's Will (1913), and North of Boston (1914), born from cosmopolitan pessimism and native faith is delivered beyond physically laboured attunement and within intentional mental glimpses. For Burnside, if one lacked intentionally out in the open one would not feel the close (but not necessarily local or indigenous) unauthorized "holy spirit" ("Lazarus" 91). In "For Once, Then, Something" (New Hampshire, 1923) -- Frost's version of "What mystery pervades a well" (Dickinson #1400) -- evasive nature is considered through the human stance that only reflects itself, being "wrong to the light" (2). This self-reflection as singular interest is rested momentarily when reflections are deemed surfaces available to be plummeted beyond and puzzlingly reveal itself "Through the picture, a something white, uncertain" (9). Frost reached for the patch of white reflected in a man-made well of water (container) but as with the effort to decode the neutral and virginal ("Design", A Further Range, 1936) -- the chastened impulse in early Burnside -- he knew that it was false game to gather more than "something" from the moment. It is an example of Frost's position that as poets, "We shall be known by the delicacy of

where we stop short", offering judgement and restraint.<sup>42</sup> Words and spaces help the mind to move by resisting the anchoring or tightening of poems to a regulated (Platonic) background and to remain secure about the possibility of connection -- it is not a domain owned solely by the post-phenomenological 'I'. Burnside offers this explicitly in MOT:

a silence about the house  
like a wider self  
a lifelong, unlaboured attunement ("Home Farm" 4-6)

Liberation to Frost is the attempt to re-energise or sustain the "play" in the natural world without shattering its energy: "His poems move by melting, build up while breaking down. They stay in motion; playing is their work" (Rotella 60-61); this is poetry yielding a language that positions reader and protagonist as a point or field of vibrant intersection (Poirer Knowing) -- something posited by silence and nothingness in early Burnside and rearticulated through intertextuality in Burnside's later mimesis of nature's web-like structures (see ch. 5).

Much like Frost, Burnside's poems stay in an energy track, shift in the wake of preceding poems, and while finishing their own performance they set up the next poem. Before the native tradition of self-reliance in Mountain Interval (1916), North of Boston's ideas of home and of the possibilities to create habitations are soundings of the lyrical mode where the findings of materials are echoed in the undersign of unstructured, mediation free, normal speech. Frost's early impulse is to register the need for our having to discover the world anew for ourselves. His particular vision of man discovering nature's value informs Burnside's eye and his sensitivity to the

---

<sup>42</sup> Robert Frost, letter to Sidney Cox, 19 Sept. 1929, Collected 714.

implications of necessity for intervention. This becomes a thematic concern rather than an influence of technique in Burnside's poetry, providing readers with a new version of Frost's theory of value located within labour, in the process not with the result. Points of intersection as in "The Wood Pile" echo throughout Burnside:

The hard snow held me, save where now and then  
 One foot went down. The view was all in lines  
 Straight up and down of tall slim trees  
 Too much alike to mark or name a place by  
 So as to say for certain I was here  
 Or somewhere else: I was just far from home. (4-9)

Spiritual growth away from people and influences are part of willed disorientation here. As with the "lack of sound" in "Mowing" (A Boy's Will) where a constrained act of the imagination in process forwards the writerly presence of the poet talking, here action relieves the dramatic situation. To be "held" by the snow is to be placed somewhere else beyond a singular framework and ironically close. Frost's premise of communion is different from Stevens'.

The latter replays an Emersonian vantage point of a world that reveals itself in forms, which have in part been placed there by the human imagination, including dreams to confirming one's existence. Frost differentiates himself from these positions and Wordsworthian sustenance, by facing the possibility that human existence is futile and meaningless. The Burnsidean solitary instils the Frostian attempt to find home by propagating the self through a discovery of identity via the other (Poirier Knowing 172). Furthermore, we follow the Emersonian energy field that flows through life to waken into renewed life, distinguished from nature, for it is built upon will and consciousness not on cycles or design (180):

Both the viewer and the view are made to seem at least latently mythological either by being put in a reciprocally enhancing relationship to one another or by suggesting the degree to which

human consciousness prevents rather than assists such a relationship (137).

The thematic of the dramatized exchange of "West Running Brook" (West Running Brook, 1928), offers speaking as a true measure and the permanence of human exchange. Impoverished dwellings and barren funereal landscapes dominate A Boy's Will, and as with "Ghost House" are precedents for Burnside's "Owlpen".

### III.C. Accumulative Knowledge

but this is my only parish,  
a space without chairs or bells  
and an altar that smells of mice  
in the wet-weather dark,

my only church this half an hour  
of shelter in a sudden fall of rain. ("Owlpen" (MOT) 7-12)

Here memories remain in the place that can possess eternity but is "uninhabitable" to the human ("Lazarus" 92). However, they can enter our knowledge from interaction and inspire our dwelling; as such they recall Wordsworth's ruins.

Wordsworth's "The Ruined Cottage" (1797) is a site where the poet confirms that he shall "no longer read / The form of things with an unworthy eye" (1: 515). However, the later Wordsworth, a wandering figure whose intense relationship with the sensual world not characterized by self-conscious observation and memory but attunement, can be read in "Owlpen". Burnside reworks the central image of refuge for the solitary to forward a sense of permanence gathered in man's capability to adapt to the environment. Bate gestures toward a sense of "survival" within a thesis of place (Romantic 34). Survival through connection to the indifferent environment is to live beyond into a necessary consciousness: one not attuned to metaphysical pantheism but one that recognises the existence of nature, its inexorable processes that guarantees human

survival, and brokers an extensive self whose survival is *co-ordinate* with that of nature.

The shift in title from "At Owlpen" (Th) represents a development from deixis to Dasein: the lyrical voice *being there* without recourse to reference, deconstructing and elevating the phenomenological. The shift in Burnside's reworking of the Romantic lyric to engender the soul rather than quest for individual permanence or spirituality recalls Thomas Hardy's use of Yalbury, for in Thomas' words, "it emphasis[es] the littleness, yet save[s] it from abstraction" (Thomas 75). This particular conception of place inserts the paradigm of the Anglican version of self (Manning, above). In Burnside's early poetry, place and self combine to show a multiplicity of subject positions to question "the reality of the self as the primary focalizing device", I continue this inquiry in the next chapter for this can be read too rigidly and determinate of meaning, offering the "I" as disappearance or self-assertion something too strict, Buell argues, for an environmental sensibility (Environmental 179). Its best expression is in the American place poem in MOT.

### III.C.1. "September evening; deer at Big Basin"

As stated earlier, I elect the following poem as a means to collate several issues proposed in this chapter and to offer the route out from an engagement with Burnside's earlier verse.

When they talk about angels in books  
I think what they mean is this sudden  
arrival: this gift of an alien country  
we guessed all along,

and how these deer are moving in the dark,  
bound to the silence, finding our secret in their way  
and making us strange, making us all that we are  
in the fall of the light,

as if we had entered the myth  
of one who is risen, and one who is left behind

in the gap that remains,

a story that gives us the questions we wanted to ask,  
and a sense of our presence as creatures,  
about to be touched.

A trinity of sense units combine to write an autumn evening in America's virgin redwood state park in California's Santa Cruz mountains. The first is a storyteller's enunciation of an intuition, an exposition of the idea that a different world is actually present or connected to this world. The second brings this idea into a relationship with an empirical life form caught within our gaze, which in turn reflects a greater sense of our contingent existence as objects being looked at from another modality: "found" flattens hierarchy and subject-object relations leaving the reader within an expansive object field, that which has been indicated by the influence of the concept of communion (above). A third phase requires the mind to shift the reading of the initial development of the poem into a higher imaginative plane: it moves outside the opposition of "they" and "we" into a view of Dasein, which has its being for its own; this occurs most interestingly as the "I" has slipped to the communal and a multi-sensual input from the external world. This gathers Burnside's inquiry into the transparent self and the emphasis on others: this is not ratiocination but an individual case within an implied community of language users emphasized by "books", "myth" and "questions".

Furthermore, this site of the poem alludes to "the gap" recalling the American development of the jeremiad from the genre of the impasse between the divine and the human, now emphasizing the ecologically connected realm borne out by separation yet evoking self-soul relations. Any inference to mind is qualified by intuition over certainty, a wider world over the pronominal field. The need to return to purity is not suggested by Burnside's position of the "we",

but the need to recognize myth and our involvement in the world as communal elements in relation to others is being forwarded. Moreover, as a version of Stevensian nostalgia that cannot find adequate forms of belief, the imperative to fill the absence with experience is signally promoted yet it is one that has learnt from the phenomenological awareness that deposits the feeling in mind on top of the virginal world. Nevertheless, the absent space suggests relinquishing the desire for more meaning by re-installing tension between heaven and earth to increase our knowledge of the contingent/non-contingent relation, these are offered as neutral consolation in our own stories, for it is more urgent to realize their neutrality once we have formulated the right response to emptiness, it is this response that drives Burnside, as it does Stevens. Philosophically, therefore, the poem attends to nothingness as the phenomenological space before cognition, the absent ground from which we arise, empirically and socially/fictionally.

The interior that I have identified is a drama brokered by viewing the self as one item in a site of encounters. "I think" moves toward a knowledge-pattern of "all that we are" without abstraction or scientific reduction; while it promotes the structure of a system outliving its content it is a form of instress or energy field that sustains the uniqueness of the moment, the essential quality of the encounter, which "bound to the silence" undermines the (poetic) structure. How could, one wishes to ask, a phenomenological poetic in isolation sustain itself under these terms? To speak too loudly, to use incorrect grammar, or to add an unnecessary extra poetic foot on the fallen bracken would make the deer disappear and the moment be reduced to a potentially empty and invaluable nothingness. This in turn throws the individual back into relief:

It is the creation of this self that is, ideally, one with



itself, with other human beings, with created nature, and with the supernatural (Martz 322).

The creation of a second self comes through angst. Through the meditative silence and reticent voice, Burnside's art slows things down. The language of "September evening" is not the context-bound purposive, efficient ordinary language of homogenised technological time, but a method of thinking where equivalence, recognition, and forms of efficiency dispel themselves. This offers the wider self-scrutiny of instress within a pattern where all is unique or if it has been encountered before it resides in the moment of precognition as if for the first time. Much as the figure coming into the encounter, readers are driven to stop. Our unthinking or inauthentic selves are pressed by the energia of art into better thinking beings, better dwellers of the historical inscape: to be "touched" is to reconfigure the self as a site, an openness, the scene of connection. It is in thanks to the quiet that the gathering (of human and animal) can raise Dasein's voice and release its identity without reduction to hermeneutic systems. This modality, the Heideggerian presence resting gently within the forest of letters in the poem's title, is exactly Bate's ecopoetic gathering (Song 262) that enables authentic encounters. It is one that heralds latency or promise, the "about to be" as an ethical position before action, bringing "the sense of our presence as creatures" and participants in collective development, the precognitive and intuitive complicity of animals.

#### IV. Provisional Conclusions

Burnside's solitary is deeply involved in the scenes he encounters. In "Septuagesima", speech is not privileged over writing, for it is silence that is desired, something that has no originary lack. "Halloween" is a vision of nature supplemented by education, but this

addition rather than reveal a lack within the plenitude becomes an essential condition of that which requires completion as with Emerson's notion of world existing for our education ("History", Collected 2). This does not deliver finality, however, but as with "Urphänomen" (FD), it models involvements. Read alongside "Chain Work", rather than an endless supplementary deferral of an other, this process is forwarded as the thing for contemplation itself within the consideration of isolationism, rawness, or de-coupled potential as opposed to an immediate presence. At moments these tease out the possibilities and limitations of a phenomenological poetics. Thus, the poems offer the provision of all that there is, not as deferral but as forthcoming. "September evening; deer at Big Basin" clarifies this. Looking again, the poem foregrounds difference between real event (the historical deer) and fiction (textual angels), which is the foundation of experience; moreover, the epiphany is driven by this encounter. This may raise the question to what degree is this reconstituted presence? Contiguity and succession are rejected for an intuition of essence (ousia) dispensing with linearity to afford temporal priority, for the emphasis on the stories that "we guessed all along" (4) delivers thrownness that denies a static origin and suggests continuum. It foregrounds the mind in action and suggests that the gap between our knowledge and the operations of the world requires interpretation and animation, the thrust of practical reason within an impasse, which is offered by scrutiny of the gap and silent fabric before the phenomenological/intentional agent speaks. But this thrust too is relinquished in the poem for a vision of our potential (over an emphasis upon action), at one with the animal yet distinctly different. It is delivered through a single foundational experience that reads diffuse elements of agency (deer and human in one site of dual-trespass) being enfolded into a single nexus. Rather than self-

effacement, Burnside's shared matrix is background to all our stories, an ethical stance outrunning the projected phenomenological experience of the animal and the narrative of the 'I'.

#### IV.1. Moving Forward

The need to arrest the self and consider time, as with Wordsworth's third epitaph ("Epitaphs Translated from Chiabrera" [Gabriello Chiabrera] 1810), brings the value of the knowledge of death viewed from the treachery of the world's promise. This harness of time and its potential, suggests God alone is valuable of trust and that all power must inevitably relinquish itself to his "eternal doom" (19). This reformulates the consideration at Leven Sands (Morcambe Bay) of the death of Maximilien Robespierre (The Prelude 10), whose beach scene is replayed in Burnside's "The Myth of the Twin (1)".

Wordsworth's poem resonates with historical crisis and personal dismay given over to the mental traveller's chance encounter with the static world of the dead. As another instance of "virtual omnipresence" (Ferguson Counter-Spirit 155), Burnside's spiritual autobiography leading from growth in proximity to death, is only a loose echo to the gravestone of Wordsworth's Grammar School headmaster. More, it is a view of existence defined in reference to (absent) others imagined as versions of one's self (the pebble-apricot) rather than a proleptic self-epitaph. This is Wordsworthian inclusion of the reader in the environment, involving themselves in the readable signs, deposited in the retroactive dreamscape: "someone is having the dream", the 'I' and the 'Not-I' and the "stories" we "guessed at". Therefore, it operates an internal address not unlike Stevens' variegated voice and the Winander boy forwarding an original poetic voice. The connection to Wordsworth's prose works on epitaphs and the immortality ode could offer a framework to read the figures

of deprivation that destabilize the self in Burnside's SIF. I do read an ecologically and relationally sound *intersection* between subject and object instilled by the "The Myth of the Twin (1)" urging its reader to re-enact this reading, as with the emphasis of "say" in "The Myth of the Twin (2)", which evokes an implied community of language users that construct the world, the lebenswelt of common-sense understanding of how we are situated, situated in *life*. However, the transcendence of suffering via the self-revelation that epitaphs afford is one where the human soul is reanimated in a revisionary process that effects a new being and there may be more potential in projecting this dimension onto Burnside.

As with Burnside's early poems Wordsworth's vision of a past self or old perception is closed while the poetic self is reconfigured via a discourse that opens the gap between life and death and inscribes the self as agent within this and as one moving forwards. It is thus that Burnside's ghost figures and dual selves of double-consciousness outplay the anticipation of death in books five, six, and seven of The Excursion driven by the Solitary's integrated and active debate, and develop into the neutral consideration of death and evil in SIF and ANS, for they forward life to be enjoyed and endured.

Moreover, Wordsworth's geologically inflected notion of language as connective tissue and intermediary between origin and tendency, "notions inseparably co-relative" ("Essay Upon Epitaphs, 1" 1810, Prose 2: 51), is curious to my inquiry. Self-perpetuation via inscription and the possibility of making the invisible (the spirit) visible (the letter), examines preservation and partners both the central idea of the human soul as immortal and that consciousness of this fact provides the ability to remember others and face our mortality (53-58). Burnside's poetry, wracked by such contemplation of cultural and personal memory, offers silent, intuitive faith as grounds for reconstruction. I suggest that this is developed within

an accumulative poetics that pulls towards Stevens and Heidegger. Wordsworth's idea of language as the incarnation of thought (84-5) is heralded as the resolute vision of the faint reverberations of life within death: "vanishings" via forgotten "High instincts" ("Ode: Intimations of Immortality" 9: 15, 18). Thus, the significance of potential life in Burnside's stone.

The greater extension to this and the radical reading of potential, nothingness, and the metaphysical aspect of self-soul dynamics comes in my Weilean reading of Stevens later in the thesis, treated separately as not to disturb the teleological arc I attempt to map through Burnside's progression in craft deposited in these early chapters. As indicated in my reading of McGonigal I have read Burnside's early work with respect to "pre-cognition" on the terms forwarded by Burnside's poems and McGonigal's reading of the spirit, and I shall turn to two more collections to consider a sense of "recovery" in my next chapter.

### 3. Developments

Self-possession is examined through new expression given to themes of flourishing and autonomy in Burnside's exploration of relational space in SIF and ANS. In the former, introspection has now shifted toward the community at large and into social psychology, while the latter explores the domestic scene in the wake of earlier findings. The following questions arise: (i) to what degree is living read as the insurmountability of human concern for others?; (ii) in the absence of this position, is there only space for neutrality or indifference?; (iii) to what extent does the development of 'pre-cognition' into 'recovery' suggest that rationality (choice and purpose) differentiates humans as unique moral agents but does not separate them from the world?

#### I. Introduction

Burnside deploys murder, violence, and rape to bring vitalism into question under the aspect of the human struggle for adaptation, survival, and co-existence as a second order to general will or striving. Here one can see a development from intuition and phenomenology (up to and including MOT) into interdependence and outward reasoning; rather than as a means to forwarding "radical illumination" of world, the readerly act is challenged to make "a re-attunement to the continuum of objects and weather and other lives that we inhabit". This should be measured alongside what Burnside has called "an attempt at oneness, a renewal of the connection to the continuum of the real, a discipline for happiness" ("Travelling into the Quotidian" 60).

In similar ways to representations of the dark, urban backdrop of Britain in the 1980s and 1990s that haunt Burnside's prose fiction, SIF does not argue that modernity is a reason for flight into nature but posits post-pastoral landscapes -- the economic and social interdependence of country and city -- impregnated not with reason but with dual agency. Point-of-view, therefore, is substantial in these collections. In SIF, Burnside simultaneously considers the mediated versus the unmediated and the notion of an objective vantage. Moving film, photographs, radio, and forensic

science are devices that objectify and neutralize human and environmental perspectives. As a continuation of the development from solipsism to the view from outside of the self, alien consciousness and technologically enabled objective views (camera, forensics) suggest that inconsistency between mind and object acknowledges an a priori structure in the human. This need not read meaning in all signs but can assert meaningful relational concepts that endeavour to press towards an understanding of presence-in-itself without taxonomizing: it is a method to present the way of the world and terms of renewal. In this chapter, I read ideas of renewal and of the self through the post-theological dimension to Burnside's engagements (sec. I.), which in turn delineate notions of order, vantage, and impulse (sec. II.). These emerge into a lyrical identity whose voice offers themes and techniques (sec. III.) developed in the chapters that follow as the thesis and the poetics settle upon an examination of dwelling.

#### I.A. Linking to American Nature

In a similar fashion to Frost's figures, Burnside's protagonists in ANS attempt to master self as their encounters in nature are discovering in its contours the order of the world. Once more, rather than subordinating the world to reason or acknowledging that self is in obedience to that which it surveys, the (Puritan) trappings of interpreting the world are given over to tapping into its energy. In Frost we note an increase in the value of instinct that recalls Emerson's notion of "untaught sallies" working alongside self-recovery and humility to provide the naturalist with an "occult recognition and sympathy" (Nature, Collected 1: 40) with the non-

human world.<sup>43</sup> The reader is to bear this in mind as SIF is analyzed.

The position at the end of Nature (VIII "Prospects") is where Emerson's monism looms: "bruteness of nature is the absence of spirit" (44) and is therefore temporary; if considered as evil it is part of the process of the good. Milder argues that Emerson's position on nature recalls a deep Calvinism that has not been relinquished (i.e. evil as a structuring principle and justification of punishment for the reprobate); for Milder, it is optimism that requires acceptance of the victims of an indifferent force and to "a creed that consigned the vast portion of living beings to perdition" (127-128). For Santayana, evil is not means to our higher selves in the sense that life is infinitely correctable within immortality; rather than a subjectivity whose primary focus is self (adventure), the development of the soul is an unfolding of "a known idea" (discipline) (Interpretations 124), the eternal that is not enslaved by change -- this correlates to Burnside's paradoxical self-soul dynamic. Furthermore, rather than a notion of evil utilized in its "good effects" Santayana calls for thinking of the possibility that "God could have regarded as a good something which has evil for its condition", for that reason it is "profoundly sad and equivocal" (125). Santayana offers a non-Emersonian vision of "an alien and overwhelming power" that cannot be humanized and thus rationally deliver sense and beauty (133), which would not explain evil but condone it (137). This intellectual presence informs my reading of SIF and ANS.

For Frost, reading evil as a filter of the world's benevolence is

---

<sup>43</sup> Distrust for formulae and theory; praise for the injection of instinct into evolutionism by Bergson and the entomologist Jean Henri Fabre (1823-1915). Robert Frost, letter to Louis Untermeyer, 1 Jan 1917, Collected 692.



close to denying its existence in as much as Emerson's notion of the circle has only one centre, the good as the source of the continuum ("On Emerson" 1959, Collected 865). Frost's critique of Emerson's Idealist monism forwards his own dualism of spirit and matter implicated in the perception of all things.<sup>44</sup> I have indicated that this compact is akin to Burnside's early stance (ch. 2, sec. III.B.). Moreover, Poirier reads the Emersonian circle as one of the soul's creations that finds itself as a governing text of sorts (Poetry 24). While Burnside has written against dualism in terms of spirit and matter as separate, SIF appears to complement Frost's idea of necessary and instinctive "doubleness" ("The Future of Man" 1959, Collected 868). This is not a commitment to Santayana's God of ambivalence or his critique of the omnipotent soul, nor does it posit modernist knowledge existing in opposition, but dual energy (that which I have called "the black within the green") is qualified as part of the process of adaptation to world: it is the governing text that Burnside constructs. The poet posits an ambivalent position with respect to prescriptivism and restraint in SIF. Whether this is a vehicle to foreground the temporal and contingent or means to critique the need to reconcile experience to the structure of belief is something that the reader is left uncertain about. It is the central issue within the contours of these collections and I wish to delineate some of its aspects.

#### I.B Method

SIF can be read as negotiating early themes by foregrounding notions of self-possession over the innocence of man pursuing instinctual gratification; furthermore, ANS appears to understand this context as

---

<sup>44</sup> See Peter J. Stanlis, "In the Clearing: Continuity and Unity in Frost's Dualism," Humanitas, 18.1 (2005): 86-114.

a means to reflect back on the self and the potential jeopardy it faces by positing a level of assurance within the lyrical "I". As a development from Burnside's early poetics, possession of the environment is not an option, neither is subsumption, thus an expanded perspective is required. This has been witnessed in the loose line, in aleatory (intertextual) poetics and in an awkward deconstructed music of the 'I' (ch. 2). The view from the organism concerns the value of the environment as either threatening or enabling; from the environment's vantage organisms are either disruptive or beneficent members. SIF portends that the human is capable of considering both perspectives but that this is neither a simple task nor easily represented as morally neutral. This may not be resolved by my thesis or by Burnside's poetry, but it is an interesting problematic that should be considered within the moral issue of self-possession that is raised in the light of a pragmatic and ethical control of nature. Furthermore, over and above the idea of adaptation to a pre-given environment, the processes whereby the environment of an organism is continually under discovery according to whether it impinges on its ability to survive or flourish, or if the environment affords meaningful relations, appear to be more vital here: it is a disposition particular to humans that reads the environment as a site of intention, and it is this contour that SIF sets forth more than any work preceding it. ANS returns to individual ethics as one no longer an inquiry wracked by solipsism but possession. Thus, the presentation of a creative continuation of meaning through relation (rather than a responsive preservation of value) tempers the notion that all flourishing is to be endorsed while also promoting relations as extrinsic properties to things. This non-instrumental view reads meanings *in* life, not *of* life; it rests as a challenge to values of conservation and forwards a need to renegotiate the transition of the past to future in new terms -- it

is picked up in TAD as a version of land ethic.

These counters develop an early concern for memory and space, and they inform my reading of SIF and ANS and assist reconsidering Burnside's pre-occupation with "double-consciousness" and epistemology as indicated in MOT. I motion how they have a relationship with healing, recovery, and home, alongside the contemplation of human agency.

## II. Order and the Submerged self

Later, he would see her on the screen,  
trying to smile, as they lifted her on to the dock,  
  
and he'd notice the frame again, baroque and absurd,  
and empty, like the faces of the drowned. (23-26)

"Swimming in the Flood", the lead and title poem, ends with three negative adjectives and a simile speaking of death; it portends an ugly collection and transparent connection to mortality. The metaphor presents fluid and disruptive energies and the location of the human within this. The female neighbour rescued from the flood that erases a village is seen clutching a picture frame whose irregularity or whimsical ornamentation underlines the grotesque nature of the scene, yet its emptiness reflects back upon the site of possibility of mediating and making sense of nature's energies. Her countenance is "dislodged" (19) to stress home with the sense suggested by Scot's thrawn i.e. the face distorted by frowning, yet to emphasize to be unsure -- freedom over obstinacy as a dark 'letting be':

her face dislodged reduced to a puzzle of bone  
and atmosphere, the tremors on her skin  
  
wayward and dark, like shadows crossing a field  
of clouded grain. (19-22)

The face suggests a form of knowledge-exile. While "dock" echoes with "baroque" to emphasize a contrast between the form of mediation and the real landing space for the rescue boat, Burnside reverses the pathetic fallacy to read human surfaces successfully from the lexicon of nature. This technique can be read as an attempt to dispel self assertion of the anthropocentric lens. The "atmosphere" or psychological climate likened to "shadows" and "clouded grain" reads the fruit of cereal crops under threatening skies that are "wayward"; it is a perverse, cross-grained, and intractable natural agency Burnside forwards. Moreover, the "puzzle" reminds us that we are reading a poem that imagines the protagonist's dreams recollecting the rescue. It is a third instance made more complex by the poem being a frame itself, asking readers to imagine the survivor (watching a newsreel of the incident in a time delay and recalling mental images of the scene) and fitting this construction outside of the poem to the mediated 'text' within the poem that the survivor is presented with. It is this meta-perspective that Burnside wishes to reveal through use of the camera "panning across the surface" (8) or "homing in to focus" (10) that requires particular attention, for it is there to emphasize the degree to which each individual is "dislodged", displaced or removed from home/evidence/origin. The two survivor figures are refugees from their dwelling places through an act of nature, while their constructed village lies intact beneath the new reservoir. To what degree Burnside has reversed surface and sub-surface from culture over nature to nature over culture is perhaps too simple a co-ordinate for this volume, but the mediation (or epistemology) of the self-at-home requires scrutiny.

## II.A. Underneath

"Science" and "A Distant Cousin" lead off from the opening poem to

expand and revisit Burnside's interest in failed epistemology and the double self or the soul "submerged". The relationship that the first three poems have with the epigraphs from Stephen Langton and Terence is two-fold: firstly, upon destruction and cleansing; secondly, to human understanding. The first epigraph from the Archbishop of Canterbury thought to be the first person to divide the Bible into chapters translates thus: "Wash what is dirty, water what is dry, heal what is wounded." The second text from Terence, the Roman slave whose learning and aptitude set him free and who was bestowed the rare honour of his master's name translates: "I am a human being; I consider nothing human alien to me." The Christian theme of the flood is a form of punishment and new beginning, which couples to and arrests human empathy. Burnside's poems suggest that the forces of violence are part of the larger motion of nature; judgement upon these is to be reserved while considering the domain of freedom, the immersion in its dynamism and complexity, and thus finding a new path to be healed in its glory. Thus, the polarity between extension and contraction, the desire to flow and move within a larger fold, yet limit this realm to a determined agency or morality given the context of relinquishing judgement. Furthermore, ideas of autopoiesis are not heralded as a new term for the more orthodox phrase, 'divinely created', but are troublesome in that the relationship to the human appears (to the human) to be determinable within conditions. I do not overstate that the epigraphs stress human forced divisions and naming, in tension with the need for healing.

SIF relates to that energy which science has relinquished from mapping, something "rhythmic and steady, / a sine wave of grace and attunement" ("Science" 19-20): a simple periodic oscillation or pattern that occurs frequently in nature, the source that Burnside's protagonists ignore, unite, or relate to with differing degrees of agency whose subsequent effects differ in kind. As grace it is

revisited in "Wrong" as "an undertaker's skill with flesh and bone, / a single-mindedness, a dark sense of being" (1: 13-14) and "a logic" (4: 13) that understands or is connected to the desire or drive to kill. This poem ends with a filmic emphasis: "scene", the "cut" of a film, and the parents of the murdered child finding "that sense of themselves / as seen, like the people in movies" (5: 1, 11, 26-27). It is an objective sense of blood, which is Burnside's microscopic point of focus in nature, connective tissue to "the old creatures" and "brothers from somewhere near Eden" ("Argentine" 13, 16). It is the Lawrentian impulse reconfigured to enable a macro vantage upon the human.

#### II.B. The Vantage Point

The news bulletin in "Swimming in the Flood" takes a panoramic view across the opening couplets viewing the destruction in motion "as if by design" (5). Loaded in terms of intelligence, this line delivers perspective challenged by the figure's dreams and his reading of his neighbour's face, at once further removed in its comparative view of the field, and yet literally closer to the object in focus both physically and psychologically. In "Wrong" the reconstructed television evidence provides the family with a "sense" (1: 14) of themselves, but this, too, is ironic. In "Home Movie", we are closer to Burnside's purpose to track a distinct motion in mind and world. Here, the voice of the murderer confesses, "I should have left the village reels ago" (12) alluding to the spool or cylinder upon which film is wound and to the revels of the villagers, "the dance on the moonlit green, / their stubborn games / of death and resurrection" (9-11). As Andersson has come close to understanding, this distancing in time and through moral reflection -- the emphasis on "should" -- denotes subjectivity that has fled from self when

confronted with the enigma of its own being. It is Heideggerian inauthenticity, where one is lost in anxiety and where objects lose meaning: being thrown appallingly back into one's individuality, cut off from the lifeworld, disconnected from the imperative to care (Sorge), and blind to the knowledge of the finite and vulnerable world. This figure has come "from the distant city" (7) and has been triggered by the solstice celebrations into an act out of concert with these "games" but operative within the same locus. This could be pushed as another view of the ecosystem from an interest in Emerson and Santayana. Considered as an enabling motion, the reel suggests agency that is not thoroughly motor-driven but one that enables an amount of passivity or wheeling from an initial, external impulse; when read alongside the insistence that "I should have guessed / listened / known" (14, 16, 19) we are unsure of the degree of social conditioning or the amount of free-will in operation. Read once more it is clear, however, that this is an inquiry into vitalism and self-possession. It is emphasized in "Home Movie" by "reel" operating in place of a unit of time and odd slip suggesting a lack of purchase on reality which in turn promotes a possessive self, ignorant of societies' arbitrarily imposed (but pragmatically shared) boundaries.

#### II.B.1. Bleeding

In "Home Movie" the dead are viewed "in their cradles of drowning" (26). Extending the flood theme in the present participle actively motivates the cleansing as a dominant grammatical device, which forwards incomplete action when conjugated with a verb i.e. 'to be'. This has profound implications for Burnside's lapsed faith, it is of interest to see him use this within the consideration of blood as the figurative melting of forms (identities and lives), and as symbol for

the locus of continuum and dynamism -- as such it negates sterile consecration. I consider this below after reading his use of voice or mask but it is worth turning to initially here in the context of vantage point and of skill, two ways of rereading agency and epistemology (Burnside's central early concerns).

The dissolved presence of Christ in Burnside's poetry is often inflected by blood as in "Home" (CK), "Urban Myths" (FD), and "Lapsed" and "The Resurrection" (MOT). These reverberate with the dark soul that has new emphasis in SIF. A knife is held "too reverently" in "Wrong" (1: 5), for the desire is to have "an undertaker's skill with flesh and bone" (13), but this skill has killed a child who is left "staring through water and leaves, and a remnant of warmth / bleeding away to the absence of love and mother" (4: 15-16). Once more readers are presented with the compact between human and death (Frost, Lawrence). We view another drowned body given significance by the fact that a partial trace of body heat to origin is a footprint metaphor written as a child "bleeding away". The child-man memory dynamics are located in the background but Burnside promotes the flowing or *letting* of blood; it indicates a form of agency that negates Herausfordern (Heidegger Question) by not forcing or challenging forth, yet it also suggests both the victim merging with the environment and the fluid psychosis of the murderer who lacks an ethical point of reflection. It is morally challenging to equate these or sit neutrally in our reading. This anxiety in the general reader offers a view of innocence and experience existing outwith nature, imposed via a sterile category to consecrate an antique value: we are being pushed to think with the poet in SIF. This plays out in "The Old Gods" where the "abandoned" (11) site for "derelict" (6) forces does not negate the "condemned" (1) or the ability to exercise "the skill of return" (16):



the science of bleeding through, when anger or fear  
 is fuzzing the surface,  
 making us dizzy and whole. (17-20)

A natural force as indicated by "bleeding" can penetrate the active feeling of passion or rage and the emotion apprehending future danger or peril, existing in confounded states of consciousness. This can provide simultaneous instability (loss of equilibrium or access to vertigo) and fullness. These are two extremes, which the waking, moral self rests in-between as a non-dualist modality that mismatches our morally instructed cartographies of psychosis. Furthermore, it promotes the wild as a level of domestication and the human as strangers to this domain in our social or moral selves. It teases readers with the normality and rarity of this state. Is this something that would come more easily to us if the mind was loose?

In "Natalie", two sonnets suggest the use of "blood" as a sign of potential. The girl's material desires are no less than trees and beehives, which became the desire for "the possible ghost" that is like "a sense of herself, / almost impossible, always about to begin" (11, 12-13). Nevertheless, this connection to nature is one that is a unique organicism, exemplified in the three-foot line of the second sonnet. Stating "She bled through the noise of the sea" (2: 1), the inherent property of matter's ability to adapt itself, echoed in the poet's sensitive shaping of nature to poetic breath and metre, is provided in the stress on "bled". It is softened in degrees through "noise" and then it is spread out into "sea" via assonance with "she" as one singular and extended movement in calm.

Burnside has set this collection with marks of dissolving bodies letting themselves into a larger, protean world. It is impossible to forget that these are victims of rape, murder, and incest, and that the poet's tone is sometimes so distant from pain that readers are morally confounded. Albeit that the use of the camera motif can be

read as an ironic aperture with respect to the corrupted or distanced view of man coupled to a post-pastoral vision or a technologically enabled creative-destructive universe, there is another point to this technique and it is revealed by the use of voice.

### II.C. Voice

Burnside places four poems together before the central poem "An Ordered World". These convey two perspectives from a sexually abused child, three readings of abduction, and the personal recollection of teenage sex (a Wordsworthian moment of transgression and guilt), respectively. The collection's central poem effects a subtle turn in poetic treatment that develops the deployment of camera/perspective and blood motioned above in the poems leading to the last sequence of "September", "Rainbow" and "Parousia". I shall outline these four phases and stress fluidity, dual agency, and recovery to underline my argument.

#### II.C.1. The Multiplicity of Impulse.

Actions and emotions of others inaccessible to one's sense safeguard the self from dispossession; furthermore, they open up our sense of the limit of the human i.e. what is humanly possible. Thus, a view of the other and of immorality brings into relief the necessary fiction of the rational soul. How this is constructed and its relation to an autonomous self is under question, too.

Burnside's incestuous paedophile absent from the scene in "The Sexton's Daughter" is not representative of institutional religion but a figure that bridges the gap between Catholicism and the pagan. The Sexton's non-clerical office is responsible for the custody of the church's fabric (sacred objects), and as warden of graveyards and

bell ringing, he represents Christian provenance and symbolism. Burnside neither humanizes this figure nor crudely suggests an evil (either secular or religious) force residing within. While his actions are reported through his daughter and are unquestionably morally depraved, the actor's will cannot be determined either in a privative sense of lacking moral rectitude or in a theological context. Burnside's post-innocent signs written into a landscape seemingly vacuous of meaning, left with only a focus on traces that act as covenants with the reader, encourage readers to suspend judgement, accept a current of the unfathomable, and to enter inside the poem's energies. Thought-in-action once more within the artwork:

At night I would climb to the attic  
 to see him nude:  
 bear-shaped and senseless, he harrowed me under the sheets,  
 while I moved on, through reeds and irises,  
 to where my voice was floating on the lake,  
 brighter than silver, threaded with water and venom,  
 drawn to his whimpers and cries, like a Halloween moon. (18-24)

The nominative personal pronoun is deployed in ten instances (eight first-person singular, two third-person singular masculine), suggesting dominion by the victim, while an almost equal measure of accusative pronouns (two first person "me" over one third personal masculine "him") and an imbalance of possessive determiners (three "my" to two "his") suggest overall control and authority in the poem's female voice. Dominion and submission are highly sensitive co-ordinates within an inquiry of this nature and appear to be at stake in "The Sexton's Daughter" and its recasting in "Catch-Kiss". In the first poem the finality of "His" (24) half-echoes the passing of sound in "kingcups" (4), the burial sight of golden marsh marigolds offering a form of sovereignty. It is alive sonically in "fish-skin" (8) as the resurrected body bleeding into "wings" and "flesh" (9) and it also plays within "the bandwidths of summer" (15) and along "his whimpers and cries" (24). This is another broad

dominion of time with Christian resonance distempered by animalism feebly inarticulate in the human but pivotal to poetic emphasis of the struggle to accept the foreignness that comes from relinquishing self-possession. Most notably the daughter climbing to the attic, "drawn" (24) to his call and him being "bear-shaped" (20), however, takes these out of the purely human domain in the final stanza. This is not the relinquishing of civilized consciousness but an emphasis upon the natural world as the last simile suggests, while the ability to violate and to submit are plainly humanly possible. Furthermore, the "Halloween moon" (24) half rhymes with "venom" (23) as biblical symbol of poison given over to the semantics of a noxious influence compounded by the word "harrowed" (20). This refers to the symbolic castration of Mary, and the victim's mother in the second and third stanzas, but more emphatically to the state of being crushed or torn psychologically, and yet primarily referring to both the agricultural action of the harrow and the biblical sacking of Hell. The general reader is presented with an exhausting array of signification that destabilizes words as a remove from experience. I argue that Burnside is not attempting to reduce the guarantee of meaning to alienate us further from world, but to posit capability situated out of total control and within a plurality of agencies or complex semantic nexus, it is a form of intertextuality that disables the lyrical 'I' as central authority. These poems resist poetic analysis and problematize gaps between events, emotion, and recollection, as I shall show.

"Catch-Kiss" takes the voice of playground innocence and enters into the mind of the Sexton's daughter through her attempts at representation and processing of trauma. Read without relation to the preceding poem (above) it suggests paedophilia. Considered as another attempt to write experience the reader's gaze turns to the two levels of recollection. The first foregrounds the present tense

processing of experience shifting into a future state where things are less direct and the use of the third-person that views the self as "someone else". The second italicized voice is the direct emotive recollection of the moment of experience set within the attempted therapeutic expression, an unfinished process as the last two lines indicate: "waiting to be released / from her buckled sleeves" (31-32). This disturbing scene represents the trapped, unprocessed mind of the trauma victim; its scenic objectivity overrides an emphasis on passivity and traces a connection to the prison of self-possession that the perpetrator faces. Here, the lines derive from "a scrap of memory" (1) yet their ventriloquism is no simple lyrical tableau enacting either empty personas or a reduction in the agency of the 'I'; neither does it show a loss of confidence in communicable relationship between events and significance, language and experience. They work to offer perspective upon the other as a means to understanding the self.

The opening section to "Lack of Evidence" reads the woods where a found body lay and attempts an objective point-of-view in the poetic "slow fade of evening" (1) and the rational police reportage, "*Katrina: twelve years old*" (15) yet the alarm call pierces through this measure: "Did no one see her vanish in the grass, / leaving behind this stain, like a chanterelle?" (11-12). Again the indeterminate sense of a trace as decoy reflects on the poem's title to suggest a world operating beyond empirical evidence or categorical insistence but one that is in song and nature. After claiming that "I set her free" the abductor develops this didactic epistemological dimension:

We are pure souls, buried in flesh,  
traces of ether, hanging in a web  
of blood and hair,  
immersed in muscle, pinned to gravity.  
Our life is penance. Death is our release:  
ascending through a mist of atmospheric,

faint as the dwindling echo of Creation. (2: 1-7)

The suggestion of purity outside asceticism negates the Catholic premise of the pollution of the soul through living. In its five qualifications. It recalls Burnside's early poetic treatment of the soul as a temporal cluster of consciousness wedded to matter. Yet, here it has its first expression in terms of death and of a continuum via a platform provided to an immoral voice to burden the reader with considering our mortal state as a physical prison and the degree to which release via any means can be viewed as morally sound liberation.

However, the poetry operates at a level of irony. These voices question the degree to which one has to relinquish the autonomous self, or the notion of self-possession, in order to integrate fully with the world. As Andersson notes, "The killers and rapists... are hopelessly lost because they have failed to surrender. Instead they resist. They are persistently self-possessive" (38). This possession enables connection to the concealed dark energies of the world, which is necessary to reach pleroma, yet an "extremity" of this energy in action by the murderers and rapists lacking "the feeling of strangeness" is an acknowledgement of that which escapes our techne and will always elude us.

Alienation from the world is the principal to understanding that not all can be possessed. The "wider self", the forms without names, and the fabric of silence beyond the human suggest that our communal selves presuppose "the recognition of our non-personal, non-social, 'neutrality', the 'otherness' of our self-possessive autonomy" (Andersson). By implication Burnside's persuasive poetics of resurrecting this otherness gains a deeper sense of self even if it is ultimately limited.

Burnside confirmed his view of the discipline of poetry as "a way of finding a place in the world" as part of the 1994 New Generation Poets publicity (McMillan 75). This navigation is considered without neutrality "and ultimately as a (sometimes dark) celebration of kinship, death, regeneration and love". He clarified this later as an engagement in "an act of repentance", "'to wish to amend', 'to reconsid er'" (O'Rourke 6). One can hear the Latinate etymology of pentirsi behind pentimento as repentance and correction, echoing strongly with Burnside's sense of Stevensian elaboration (above) and his continual reworking of poems over time as extended meditations. However, the stress on 'celebration' read into "Lack of Evidence" suggests more than "penance" as an orthodox religious discipline i.e. self-mortification as an expression of guilt for sin. Stripped of its purgatorial connotation it denotes an amendment of one's life into spiritual obedience. I read this within Burnside's sense of religion in the sense of "reconnection" (AL 178), a method to regain participation within one's environment. This complements his definition of grace as living the full life and "making ready to willingly and contentedly surrender its place here to whatever is to come" (Oxley 60) -- the ultimate letting be into life and making good of one's necessary habitat of "estrangement" (Harrison 265).

#### II.C.2. "An Ordered World"

The fifteenth poem of twenty-nine divides the collection into two halves while its final line highlights the determinate three-beat rhythm to underline the dark and uncertain epistemology of Burnside's penitence: "vestigial, demonic, inexact" (24). These adjectives under-qualify the "presence" that this collection sets at a distance i.e. "ether" (2), "hiss" (9), "filmy ferns" (14) etc. which cannot be accounted as an "algebraic fingerprint" (19) by "the finest

instruments" (21), for no mathematics relates to the degenerate survival, the supernatural, and the imprecise energies that challenge ordered belief. "An Ordered World" clarifies the themes and techniques above while the promise and fitness of things in the world is subject to irony; as a negation of appropriative knowledge, it foregrounds the message itself over determinate meaning -- life over reason, energy over will.

#### II.C.2.a. Other Voices

The perpetrator's voice in "Schadenfreude" (in turn recalling "Wrong" and "Home Movie") has a subtle increase in ethical reflection than witnessed in the first half of the volume, which foregrounds moral instinct. "I knew in my secret heart / I was up to no good / and relished the inexplicable / malice of being" (11-14), in effect tunes the malicious enjoyment of the pain of others into a guilty recollection of teenage sex. Poems residing in the second half of the collection after the didactic clarification of "An Ordered World" cultivate this voice. It is unclear if the persona in "A Swimming Lesson" is that of the murderer in "Lack of Evidence" (whether he has killed Natalie and Ellen MacInnes), but it is certainly a chillingly calm expression of guilt that flits into two highly-charged, possessive and socially disconnected passages.

The poem's first two sense units open with "maybe", neutrality considering luck, talent, or skill of the victims while urging possibility and uncertainty. These are overlooked for the faith in the "transformation" from child to swan to fish to weed; an unashamed certainty in "*the bodies we shed*" (58) as we move out of life. The murderer thinks of this metamorphosis as natural but also in terms of a contract: "taking a form from the water and making it hers, / accepting its favours, repaying the debt in kind" (17-18). The



financial lexis opens up a sense of commodity and treasure, an aspect of the voice's fetishism beyond original indifference. This is borne out in two manners: first, the attention to objects: pebbles, lips, eyes, and clothing; second, the body's spirit "merging with the tide" (16) returning from where it was loaned, and the body's arrival "for everyone to share" (69). However, the poet denies complete consumer control over the victim in the final movement of the poem where nature refuses to relinquish itself to human desire, while a human body devoid of life wracks the perpetrator longing for serenity. Here, rather than asking us to sympathize with the murderer's unfulfilled desire to remember the woods, fishes, and barley fields close to the site of the murder, we are given the lasting negative image pressed in his mind:

but all I can see is the mud in the lines of her face,  
and the scatter of leaves  
that someone has brushed aside,  
revealing the clouded skin, and the gas-blue eyes  
where thinking has stopped,  
like the calm at the edge of a snowfall. (77-82)

Burnside's collection may allude to the need to connect to the dark energies of the world but he has made it impossible to empathize with a man who called sexual encounters "lesson[s]" (30) and the child victims of his abductions "unreturned" bodies. We may find that he has stepped beyond the moral border. Here, the soiled face melts into the wooded arena like camouflage as with the bleeding of forms in the first half of the collection. Whether this foregrounding of the victim is ambivalent or not, it out-sounds the unknown perpetrator and gives the victim a last stay against transparent commodification. I feel that it is in a manner not unlike Gian Lorenzo Bernini's portrayal of the metamorphoses of Daphne (Apollo and Daphne, 1622-25, Galleria Borghese, Rome), opposed to the rape of Proserpina (Pluto and Proserpina, 1621-1622, Galleria

Borghese, Rome).

Burnside arrests the moment of action and mediation, as with "September Evening; deer at Big Basin" and later in "Parousia". The two ellipses that indicate the spaces in-between the linguistically determinate or processed experiences and emotions work to foreground slowness as an enterprise of art allowing the world to arise. In this space we read of the victim's skin "clouded" and her eyes "gas-blue" -- both elusive and ethereal descriptors. The attention to vapour suggests transcendence but this twenty-one line sentence and largest semantic unit of the poem shifts from a recollection of the victim's passage along the river to the discovery of the body and the two separate realities in the murderer's mind. I read the word "thinking" (79) terminate victim *and* perpetrator. This extends to the world echoed in the victim's habitat resonating with her absence, and in the poetic equation of her composure to the tranquillity at "the edge of a snowfall". The dependence upon the natural world for our measurements posits that we cannot operate above or outside this realm, its co-ordinates, or be anything but its inhabitants: any "edge", therefore, should be read as an ironic and imposed terminus upon our many selves in nature. It is also an instance of short-circuiting serenity that is delivered not by possession and control but by relinquishing authority to the elemental.

### II.C.3. Rooting: "September", "A Private Life", "Parousia"

In "Natalie" the victim "bled through the noise of the sea" (2: 1). In "In the Psychiatric Hospital" -- an autobiographical recollection of Burnside's stay in Fulbourn Hospital, Cambridge, as a psychotic, suicide risk (AL 246-47) -- the female patients who are victims of sexual abuse by their fathers are written as "bleeding away through their dreams" (12). In "Cathy" (a fellow patient during Burnside's

stay in Fulbourn) the figure plays with a doll as if it were a dead body. "Cathy" indicates the love of a replica in absence of the real as a motif of responsibility and devolved empowerment; in terms of the title poem the contingent and transferable nature of emotions are motioned. Moreover, the figure could be another version of the bored pupil who turns to killing (insects) for pleasure forwarding social-environmental causality alongside negative masculinity ("Wrong" 4, echoed later in "Husbandry", TAD). However, this figure tunes into "infinity" and "a purer mind, a cleaner way of seeing" ("Cathy" 2: 12, 14). She is an artist who paints to exorcise her trauma and depression. Her work "seeps into the desk" (3: 8), which she lets "bleed" (3: 9). These intangible, morphing selves and indistinct agencies in this last poem are considered as a flowing pool of "names and fears" that suggest "a garment of presence whose purpose she cannot fathom" (3: 8, 9, 11, 14). This is Burnside's shape-shifting force. It runs through things manifesting in good forms ("Barren"), the iniquitous ("Searching for Lambs") and sometimes singularly indeterminate forms ("The Old Gods) in different places and at different times, and can be channelled creatively. Thus, in "Barren" a similar soul to the graveyard persona that brings life to the deceased operates in "A Miracle on Market Day" but we have moved through a desire to reconstitute and Burnside can now read the "blood warm" cattle at night positively harnessing this energy. It ends with their bodies homed to "the purr of the darkness within, and the rich wombs breeding" (15) which portends -- in its shift from "bleeding" to "breeding" -- futurity and healing that reside in the final movement of the collection where a greater emphasis on dwelling is evident. I shall now bring this to the fore.

"September" is Burnside's signature poem. He works from an imagination set within falling light, turning to the dark as a moment of "grace" (7) in "gloaming" (8) -- a word used poignantly by Bishop

and Sorely MacLean, and he uses the voice of "Halloween" and the tone and register of "A Private Life". In the earlier poem, following the internal focus of private mental landscapes ("In The Psychiatric Hospital" and "Cathy") the desire of the poet is to connect to the wider landscape via journeying. The authenticity of this experience is tempered by the poet provoking our conception of this interface "like memory" in "A Private Life" (4). This places the poetry within Burnside's past, into the mining villages of Lumphinnans and Kelty in close proximity to the poet's hometown of Cowdenbeath, Fife. Three words dominate this poem. "Smudges" relates to the towns, pencil sketched and blurred to vision; "scratched" to their names, clarified and permanent in writing; but it is the people quietly looking out onto the world who turn back to the domestic scene that are most significant: in their wider selfhood they witness "their *struck* lives gathered around them" (12 my emphasis). It is an epiphanic shock and striking sense that denotes "rooting" beyond the flawed writing indicated by "smudges" and "scratched", better techne is available to humankind.

In "September" the laying of foundations is made not by turning inward but by the connection to season, light, and heat: "a stepping out / to gloaming" (7-8) afforded by attunement to the latency of being, "something of myself" (12):

as lyrical and poignant as the sound  
of little owls and foxes on the hill  
hunting for blood and warmth, in the yellow bracken. (12-15)

The "yellow bracken" suggests the warm orange-brown fern of dry hill-sides read as a tone diluted by the desolate plains in twilight. This suggests solitude rather than deprivation, for Burnside's loneliness as with the owls paired by foxes is a lyrical conversation with the energy of "hunting". The animals stimulate the mental state

in "September" in arousal both piquant and tender yet driven by the need to sustain one's self over vengence. It is a fine balance that Burnside has attempted to work in-between the extremes of self-relinquishment and self-possession. "September" and "A Private Life" suggest that this is possible from internal and external points of reference; thus rooting is giving agency inside and outside self.

Finally, in "The Rainbow" the biblical covenant returns to the protagonist of "Swimming in the Flood" as if to come full circle, leaving "Parousia" as post-script and ending chorus. The tableau is rich. The flood has now passed but the house is bereft of divine grace and man is now connected to the tidal force rather than the tricks of "ephemeral" (12) landmarks. The traces of his neighbours who came to bury the drowned horses resonate in "the locked barometer, / the clock stopped with silt, / the almanac / drowned in the fire" (21-24). To look back across the poem we note duckweed and mud "shrouded" (18) the horses. It is the only theological vesture derived from the sign of murder (above), or an unfathomable force that denies empathy as it is located in the past tense. We are driven to locate the present sense of belonging and the writerly act that achieves this. Our inquiry is connected to the failed effort by duckweed to carpet the surface of the blue element green, to make a landing site of the protean, locating home close to all this water, and finding the moving spirit in a fixed earth. Finally the tools for measuring atmospheric pressure and time, forecasting technologies of weather and climate are arrested and left suspended in a visual image. Burnside wishes to fold all previous signifiers into this closing shot. It is significant that the progression of atomic time is negated by a loose stratum of soil and that the annual tables of information and astro-meteorological forecasts are ruined by resisting inverted dual elements. This is a poem and a song of earth, fire, and water highlighting the sense of the sky and an elegy

that designates a bereft, rootless world incontrovertibly beyond appropriation.

#### II.C.4. Parousia

For de Man, parousia has been treated by interpreters of poetry as a false refuge in consciousness, a place where soul protects itself by misrecognizing the impossibility of unification with a centre or origin. Schmidt shows that Heidegger's Hegel outlined the dependency of object upon subject in par indicating 'to us', promoting subjectness. Whereas subjectness can be read as non-ideal i.e. at work in the concrete particular, Heidegger laid challenge to the notion that there is either something beyond beings or a common denominator to being (Schmidt 23) -- his preference is for an emancipation of the future, recuperation disentangled from the past. We witness Burnside struggle to achieve this disposition, urging forwards in mind and loosely in aesthetic form, but racked by memory and repetition: the pull to a straight line always being bent by nature's circular gravity. If Bishop is mentor Burnside is failing her ability to travel as an alien, or he is offering his poems as instances of how difficult this is to achieve.

\*

In "Parousia" the poet wishes us to imagine "this charged / sky" (1: 2-3) in order to liken it to "a biblical presence" (1) or second coming version of parousia. This atmosphere extends beyond the present moment, for it is not only happening now but "before" (3) the storm's arrival, and in the future, while the trees are seen "streaming with rain" (5). It takes the imagination to make this widening available, for the mind is photographic and works to "cut

out" mathematical points in space rather than "sew the pieces together" (Bergson Matter 31, 33). Prolepsis leads to thought: "but I think, if it came, there would be / something more subtle" (1: 8) where things become "closer" (9), "intimate", and "sudden" (11), which for Dennis O'Driscoll, marks an epiphany of the intimate, "of spontaneous neighbourly love" (111). Burnside's scene with "limes trees around the station" (4) develops a Coleridgean confinement into a potential journey. The allusion to the cross (via crucis), however, is the secularized pilgrimage into the post-pastoral almost technological realm where trees "streaming with rain" and later "fields and timber yards... moorhens' nests and oil drums full of rain" (2: 7-8) co-exist. Yet the post-pastoral site remains underwritten by energies only accountable via images drawn from nature: "vixen and weasel, barn owl and pipistrelle" (16): carnivores and nocturnal dwellers "understood" (15) in this new proximity. This is familiar and significant territory to the Burnside reader, although the natural world bears an altogether new significance in its qualification to the "I" and its ability to harness self-presence within holistic presence. I have read this as another qualification to the appropriation of the world; I expand this once more.

"Companion self: not me, but echoes / breeding on the skin" (2: 1-2) finds the Emersonian 'I' of interrelation rather than the Fichtean ego while also a double-consciousness that cannot be killed off but is breeding as it is bleeding. Qualified as "a half-life of touches and blows, the sub-microscopic / pattern of resurrection" (3-4) it purports mind and body as conductors interposed between objects working in reflex or voluntarily. In distinction to an enclosed world within a world (solipsistic or Idealist centre of relations), a model of influence and impressionability is presented where contact suggests that matter does not pass through the universe unsullied but that it is pulled and pushed by the universe's forces (extensions of

the matter). Thus, "resurrection" denotes a rational and modern idea of self-heal and constant process.

The third and fourth sections attend to the notion of the border. SIF challenged notions of isolated states especially in its vision of bleeding and transformations suggesting fluidity. "Parousia" holds the notion of a willed crossing between states, or at the very least, acknowledgement of the difference between states. "It was less of a stream than a border: / a rill over wheat-coloured stones, then a sudden / dimming" (4: 1-3) indicates a temporary trickle following rain and connoting the verbal sense to form by flowing where each reflects the other as motioned by the stones' texture of grain. Yet this otherness is not within the same to the conscious mind, it is "the far side" that "was stranger's country, a half-mile away" (4: 9).

Burnside writes this as a peripheral pathway, the posterior extremity (or physical terminus) of a domestic horse, and "a glimmer of slate in the distance" (11). The last image, following apartness and difficult vision ('dimming', 'distance') is of a house roof: terminus, shelter, and border or human horizon of vision. As "distance" it connotes comfort apart from self, and as a picture of his mind is metaphor of the division of home into homestead, land into private places. Moreover, home or the human is conveyed in all three units but gives way to the "dog-fox" -- a pre-existent hybrid (from "Summer") -- echoed in the third movement, where "soul becomes / conceivable, immersed in viscera, / and mind endures, in wisps of meat and bone" (16-19). This complex stanza's intratextuality and peripheral vision returns to latent predator knowledge within the domestic (n.b. the seven natural qualifications to the metrical measurement "half-mile") while also suggesting that which is hard-felt against the temporal, rational engine. This weds matter to perception and spirit to the interior to achieve notions of



difference that one can transgress or traverse. The final accumulative binary that I have delineated plays out in the double octet of the last section:

All resurrections are local:  
 footprints bleeding away  
 through marsh-grass and water,  
 a sound you can almost hear  
 of the flesh renewed  
 in the plashing of rain  
 or a quick trout  
 breaking the stream. (5: 8)

Witnessing the uninterruptible processes of nature while making human sense of the energy via the lexis of body is a terrain Burnside constantly marks. Here, following mind inflected metaphysically and spiritually, the stream is broken, not fixed: the image of the flood recovers as the significantly ecological term for the human element, the "footprint", dissolves when the transitive and fluid but indistinct world can operate. It is the site where the "plashing" of rain out-sounds all other noise, erases distractions, and affords the clarity of newness:

For the sign I have waited to see  
 is happening now  
 and always, in this white continuum  
 of frost and spawn:  
 the blood in a tangle of thorns  
 where it stiffens and pales,  
 the hard bud splitting through ice  
 and the nailed palm healing. (5: 9-16)

This is Burnside's version of Williams' reconciliation through things not ideas in the image of saxifrage ("A Sort of Song", The Wedge 1944). "Now / and always" upholds a logic of each temporal nexus extending beyond itself but is significant as an isolated aperture and wide angle upon extensive space and time hooked by the historically contingent present. A continuum is modelled by the effects of winter and its pure white forms, an invisibility that

casts out into futurity as represented in the cradling of fish milt. Earth's reproductive agencies are given biblical force yet *restoration* gives way to *revival* promoting forward direction and spirit in the final two images: the latter imagined and mythical brokered by relaxed 'l' sounds; the former witnessed everywhere and conveyed via punchy monosyllables and onomatopoeia. "Bud" relates more than sonically to "blood" offering rawness, indispensable and true to the energies of renewal and growth. The opening of the couplet provides nothing less than a reverberating dynamism and creative evolution resonating across the calm surface of last things. It has not reassured the human but it has responded well to world.

While the early poetry enacted gnosis over organization, aporia in SIF is difficult to grasp, for the degree of psychological verisimilitude the lyric enacts with murderers and rapists. This is not posited to disable poetic faith or to reconfigure submission to the world from a paradigm of self-effacement, but does suggest negation of the subjugation of world to self-interest. As we move towards ANS, ataraxia (tranquillity undisturbed by trauma) and eudaimonia (well-being) rise on the horizon. This occurs while a (Puritan) world of unfathomable significance and corrupted faculties is retranslated into an increase in vigilance. This is a prerequisite to accepting the foreignness of the world as fact, the prologue to the art of losing and living within the world that disowns. More than Williams, one is made to think of Bishop.

### III. A Normal Skin

If SIF shows a redemptive journey turning away from society and trammelling the contours of nature as a return to first things, ANS

assists our consideration upon whether this period in Burnside's oeuvre considers that journey as one in which we share the ultimate laws of nature or not. Burnside did not posit a mechanism whose purposiveness is morally calculable, nor was redemption figured as an element within a journey or return to origin. Moreover, the connection to the power source was not a promotion of self-sufficiency via exile from society or a retreat to nature.

In the use of woods and rivers as the locus of dark forces without direct referencing to a post-pastoral consciousness that is aware of the annihilation of time and space by the technological age, Burnside promoted the sustaining and irrevocable persistence of nature in SIF. To what degree is this a pre-text to sustaining the "I" outside agencies of the self, and to what extent is this scaffolded by a primal cord to nature or harmonic, connate existence?

The epigraphs to ANS appear to promote this collection as more philosophically complex than its forbear but they are in direct relation to these simple and central issues of environmental aesthetics:

When the mind is like a hall in which thought is like a voice  
speaking, the voice is always that of someone else.

Wallace Stevens

And if the soul, too, my dear Alcibiades, is to know itself, it  
must surely look into a soul.

Plato: Alcibiades I

Out of this same light, out of the central mind,  
We make a dwelling in the evening air,  
In which being there together is enough.

Wallace Stevens

For Heidegger, the human act is to be understood as one of free being motivated by reason and understood through dialogue. One can see this in Frost and Wordsworth, too. Yet, here, Burnside offers Stevens. It is profound to argue that a loss of self can be attained

by recognizing the other as a version of one's self, but the performative structure of dialogue does promote the subject position turned outward (Bushell 102-9). The larger context for Burnside is that the foundations of man are in spirit, and for Stevens, the spirit of poetry is the ultimate being. The degree to which a Transcendentalist version of redemption (that views the world as broken, determined by man as disunited) is found in the descent of spirit to its rooting in the material world appears to be a matter of view upon relationships. Here the risk of substantiation is none other than continual renewal witnessed in the natural world (Frost "But God's Own Descent", In the Clearing), which can be echoed in strategies of repetition, elaboration, and accumulation.

However, reading across these epigraphs we begin with Stevens ("Adagia" Opus) and a large mind of which thought is but a character, as my reading of Stevens vis-à-vis Bloom and Carroll (ch. 1). It is a way of stepping outside one's conscious self or noting that this is relatively small on a personal scale. While Stevens attempts to overcome the experience of discovering that we can only see ourselves via others (or think of ourselves in terms of our discoveries of things in others) made through his attempts to create a central mind or single voice (Andersson 36-37), this otherness leaves the human behind yet does not dispatch him from the scene. Socrates' discussion with Alcibiades posits that knowledge comes from interaction with others, a commitment to dialogue and exchange in turn reflecting upon the self in a larger world and how we connect to the soul. The autonomous self is relinquished for what Emerson called the ability in loneliness to "behold the beauty of another character, which inspires a new interest in our own" ("The Transcendentalist", Collected 1: 208): as with Wordsworth (especially Home at Grasmere) that which is "lodged" in one forces the other "home". While Emerson stresses the sovereignty of the individual and

the ability to access the absolute, Burnside is emphasizing the dependency upon others, something leading from MOT and the solitary, and given a Shakespearean twist in TLT (43).

Stevens' final lines are from "Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour" (The Rock), which has considered the imagination's role in providing protection or support in our modern poverty or lack of single faith or foundation, where "we forget each other and ourselves" (10) and find that we are together. This union over singularity is attainable, we note, if we are aware of our foreignness to ourselves and aware of our need to locate the other as a step towards understanding our position with others. This trinity is dialectical only in the sense that listening shifts to looking and then as third term into being. Thus, there is compliance to the Stevensian imperative to allow the relation its true and full fruition: "Let be be finale of seem" (Collected "The Emperor of Ice Cream" 7). It is more a feat of association by Burnside, amplified in "The Man who was Answered by his Own Self". Here, the domestic setting of a dream flicks between monochrome and colour to suggest states of mind reflecting on self and self with others. The larger context of religious poverty enables people to tune in "to nothing, to their own selves, calling home" (39). It is a useful poem to read the epigraphs as indexing the themes of love, solitude, and domestic arrangements, which ANS begins with a restatement of SIF's concerns but opens out into the construction of dwelling and enables a shift in my focus as I move to TAD in my next chapter. I qualify this below.

### III.A. Three Phases

Burnside formulates ANS on the same terms as its forbear indicating a

direct parental relationship over and above the usual progress from collection to collection. As with SIF, twenty-nine poems lead from the title poem and are separated by a middle poem that operates to modify a series of epistemologically concerned poems, leading to a longer contemplative poem. Here, "A Normal Skin" replays notions of pain, order, and will and then moves into notions of difference and compromise on the domestic scale ("A Process of Separation"). As a development of the parent collection, poems of navigation and attunement are centred by "Simon of Cyrene", which in a similar fashion to "An Ordered World" turns the collection into another series of poems pertaining to the grounds of knowledge, yet this operates on a wider level. Here, "Vanishing Twin" recollects Burnside's dead sister's dreams; "Agoraphobia" reads the map of his partner's vision; then "Unwittingly" turns on the epigraphs to speak of measuring the self within self and world. Following this sequence, Burnside has shuffled two decks of navigation -- 'floating' and 'love' -- that increase the inflection of place, which is foundational to "Epithalamium". I read this as Burnside's entrance into the mind that orchestrates TAD.

### III.A.1. "A Normal Skin" to "A Muddy Road"

"A Normal Skin" explicitly emphasizes our ordinary point of relation to the world indicated by the physical boundary of flesh. The poem begins with an image of an eczema sufferer dismantling a collection of (material) clocks and sustaining their order mentally. It is a view upon surface boundaries, decreation, and the vantage of the neighbour. The image of breaking our constructions as a method of inhabiting the world has a Stevensian flavour, yet as it turns away from the neighbour and gives itself back to the self the poem suggests ideas of listening and feeling that are typical Burnside.

More critically, one could view the change in focus from the metaphor of machine falling to the semiology of self as a post-phenomenological priority.

We are told that over the knowledge of how things are made, "the order she creates / and fixes in her mind" (13-14) is imperative. This mapping enables the voice to turn to his partner and suggest how gravely he is misunderstood yet the two instructive modes of reasoning replay ideas of order and pain as a means to make a dwelling place:

What we desire in pain  
is order, the impression of a life  
that cannot be destroyed, only dismantled. (18-20)

What we desire in pain  
is reason: an impression of ourselves  
as wounded, explained,  
coerced from a destination. (26-29)

This voice echoes with the Emersonian faith in regeneration that displaces all other knowledge systems. Here, as a restatement of the convincing, urging voice of "Lack of Evidence" (SIF), a rhetorical deviation into "impression" of selfhood motivates indication, stress, or emphasis as pressure and therefore will, promoting the instinctual meta-narrative of redemption, perfectability, and enlightenment as backdrop to contingent things. However, the poem suggests that complete (finite) destruction or purification is impossible; furthermore, rather than *degeneration* a form of *disintegration* comes from violence or suffering, always leaving something that remains and is open to possibility and growth. The untangling chinks of white space are slightly symbolic here, resonating with this collection's epigraphs, the self-effacement and relinquishment of early poems, and portending ecological conceptions in later verse.

These compound in the four words "coerced from a destination".

Here, constraint normally thought of in terms of origin is derived by futurity, but rather than being compelled 'by' a force, we are driven "from" it. This reconfiguration of the expected line into semantics of reverse logic forwards a sense of thrownness and futurity, circularity, and determinism by mortality, purposiveness rather than essentialism. I argue that these are highly important abstractions to make from Burnside's poetics. This complex and philosophical colouration infuses Burnside's contemplation of partnerships as energies working the border between self and mind on terms of difference and the compromise of selfhood within the domestic scale. This is an important element to verify the poetics of home; furthermore, it has particular significance in the development from surfaces to pathways made via "A Process of Separation" and "A Muddy Road by Adam Johnson's House".

"A Process of Separation" is prefaced by a fragment of Williams' triad in "The Ivy Crown" (Journey to Love, 1955) from the collection dedicated to Williams' wife, as with Burnside's collection.

The business of love is  
cruelty *which*,  
by our wills,  
we transform  
to live together. (38-42)

The choice of late Williams is acute: suffering and the confrontation of death, where renewal via contact with the world and through ideas of inclusiveness is central to his work following the two volumes of collected poems (1950, 1951); it provides the conceptual bearing to Burnside's volume and gives Burnside purchase into Americana beyond the Lawrentian impulse.. Williams' poem views the non-accidental (willed) tryst or "lie" (1) as a contract that fluctuates seasonally. Williams' imagination bridges the gaps between differing degrees of



happiness and comfort as "confinement" (6). In Burnside's poem, iambic pentameter eventually gives way to the sense unit made via triad, echoing Williams' music and his unique auditory imagination driven by commingled union of meter and image (an increasingly sharp influence upon Burnside's loose-line from ANS onwards). Shortness of breath in short lines and the dictates of realms of consciousness speak of ghosts in terms of snapshots of memory underscored by the decaying yet present bodies and shells of animals and insects within the territory of home, and the fusion of these forms as a fragile means of touch or connection to the wider self.

So much of flesh is grass, you find yourself  
in ramsons and the smell of bittercress,  
in mullein and foxgloves, lighting the summer nights (3: 21-23)

while I construct this tunnel in the dark:  
cockchafer; worms; a cobweb of blood on my tongue;  
and all the time I long for transformation. (27-29)

His partner is constructing pagan spells to increase security. Garlic ramson and cruciferous cardamine suggest exorcism. The grey rosettes of verbascum and foxgloves are ornamental brightening elevated in the golden classical mythological messenger of gods. By contrast (yet an exaggeration of Dionysian impulse) the masculine figure uncontrollably deploys the highly destructive and armoured cockchafer beetle and images of death. We should read these figures closely. The first folds into the world like the assonance of "flesh" with "grass" and "cress" and promotes the 's' sound leading to the mythical and covenantal messenger that "keeps us safe". The second figure is trapped between reality and desire exaggerated by the voice of pursuit and escape echoed in the punctuation that scans urgently but discontinuously. Both of these are extensions of earth energy. In the poetics, two rhythmical periods undercut by smaller fragments marked by an array of semi-colons and commas enforce a torn

mind and sense of fragmentation across human and world. The disarray exists within an emphasis in these poems of contrast between partners where the male is equally at one with the world but implicating a fretted holism in addition to serenity or at-oneness in the feminine. These extensions, therefore, are means to "the art of erasure" (5: 8) in an early period of consideration of an unhomed self.

Inspiration from the American painter Andrew Wyeth whose bleak landscapes of the painter's Quaker settlement home in Pennsylvania brings Burnside to echo the imminence of death in the native and subdued poetics of "Muddy Road by Adam Johnson's House".

It's this knowing the land by the names  
of neighbours: the long-deceased  
and the newborn (1-3)

The interval works to show the division yet interrelation between life and death, the immanence of childhood attunement within adult memory where "Under it all, the pure geography" of the spirit of infancy is alive and things reveal themselves as if for the first time:

you stopped at Kuerner's barn to warm your hands  
and saw a young buck pouring from the roof,  
  
the ankles crossed, the last thick cloud of steam  
hanging around the muzzle and the groin  
  
its dying the heat you breathe  
in the first chill of winter. (10-15)

An allusion to the austere work of Wyeth's Chadds Ford paintings, especially Tenant Farmer (1961, Delaware Art Museum, Delaware), spills into the poem in the final image, and as readers of the regional poetics we must enter a domain that is not our own. The shortening of line and the minimizing of beat from pentameter to the three-stress line delivers the hanging animal into a sense echoing

the physical arrest along the pathway. Again, Williams' technique of propulsion (projective verse) seems to be a strong influence here. The final couplet's lines, bereft of words to equate to the length of narrative lines, push the sense of stopping short and evoke immediacy of the material artwork resulting in an unfinished finality yet their work is fulfilling. As in Williams, this shortening of word and action bring the contrast between heat and chill into a horizontalized shared space of the living and dying, the internalization of one life into the other as this is primarily an image of destruction as creation in the sense of depicting predator as progenitor. This trajectory continues and in turn colours the sense of the last line, for the notion of death runs through "chill" potentially made crisper into 'kill' but penetrating the body as coldness both literally in the heat and in the absence of sympathy in the necessary and neutral slaughter. This realism anchors the metaphysical and biblical register into a consideration of the humanly dwelt world, what we share with others, the cost of our presence, and the site of meaningful relations beside liberty in negation.

### III.A.2. "Simon of Cyrene" and two epistemological streams

Compelled by the Roman authorities to carry Jesus' crucifix (Mark 15.21-22, Matt. 27.32, Luke 23.26; contradicted John 19.16-17) Simon of Cyrene symbolizes action devoid of sympathetic generosity or free will and being thrown into a context outside of self agency. The fifth station of pilgrimage acts as site for Burnside's model bystander, who "like everyone" (15) should be involved in another world, implicated in a different history. Informing the second section of ANS with a politicised stance, this models the imposition of a role that requires a critical attitude to the role with the

effect of widening his realms of thought, as indicated above and introduced by his mind reaching to his children, wife, and garden. This human extending across time and ploughing resources for the future -- an Old Testament idea given a new voice not unlike John (12: 47), less of judgement more of saving and it is split into two streams of thinking, detailed below.

### III.A.2.a. The Floating World

The cover design to ANS centres a hand-carved wooden, female Japanese Noh mask (Onna-kei) taking its shape from Buddhist sculpture and representing joy, anger, grief, and happiness in one image; it is a photograph of neutrality that hides three states of dynamism. Burnside extends this thread in "Ukiyo-e", "A Noh Mask", and "Floating". The first poem recalls Jane Hirshfield's same-titled poem in its treatment of the prints in contrast to the moving world (Gravity): the suspension of animation in ancient Tokyo is one that "readies itself for the first pale stars / that will not come" (17-18). It settles in the section "The Other Earth" where poems are disconnected or out of time. As with Hirshfield, Burnside enforces the notion of temporal rooting in his self-reflexive stance on the manifest ink by reading place as a loose co-ordinate through the collapse or extension of time: that is, memory in and out of time impressing upon the present as a way of thinking and acting ("Ukiyo-E").

Burnside develops this model into "History" poems (ch. 5) but the development in this collection in "A Noh Mask" works upon psychological identity and offers another view on the Williams quotation, "negotiated space, between the smiles" (25) and the potential for the richer self "That's waited in the flesh / to be expressed" (17-18). It may reflect Lawrence but would also denote

Williams' music of spring. The final poem moves out of the Edo context by focussing on the sub-text of anchoring somewhere together. This takes Bob Dylan's springtime lyric "If Not For You" (New Morning, 1970), for the need of the other as a means to a better navigable world-placed self, where the cosmological forces do not appear misaligned from individual destiny, perhaps circling back to Williams and Journey to Love. However, "Floating" endorses the dislodged foreignness and blurring of vision and song, "a slowed / current" (20-21) captured in "the last / glimmer of day" (9-10). These poems weave separate treatments of place and motion with Burnside returning to his concern for perspective, and beginning his quest to sing Anstruther into the canon of Scottish poetry.

#### III.A.2.b. To Scotland

The movement from "A Photograph of old West Fife" to "Anstruther" is the most concentrated poetry of place-names in Burnside's oeuvre, and it is the beginning of an emergence of the theme of dwelling and ecology entwined.<sup>45</sup> "A Photograph of Old West Fife" is the most expansive poem of this collection, attempting to represent a stream of consciousness with the poet back in Cowdenbeath. Situated on the road connecting the parallel Old Perth Road and the High Street, the train station at the easterly end and the Firth of Forth to the south and east, brings memories of place and travel to trigger sense-impressions that "make me strange" (24) when detached from home. It is a curious alien consciousness that derives from a return home; it could suggest fulfilment yet also a journey that allows for knowing

---

<sup>45</sup> Five places are named in titles of seven poems. Up to TGN, the ratio of poems with place-names in titles are as follows: ANS (6/29), TGN (6/30), MOT (7/54), TAD (2/23), Th (3/48), FD (2/39), CK (1/25), TLT (1/27), SIF (0/29). GS (4/11) is over-represented by the four quartets. Twelve places are named within nine poems from "Ukiyo-E" to "Epithalamium" in ANS; nine places in eleven poems in "The North" to "Dundee" in MOT.

things in immediacy without pre-existent experience or categories. This sensibility leads from images of innocence into unknowing, which as a development dilutes the exilic frontier.

A burst of energy comes forth in several short poems. "Children Sledding in the dark, Magdalen Green", recalls the site near Burnside's writer residency at the University of Dundee during this first period back in Scotland. "Shiochie's Hill, Dunkeld" and "At Moniak Mhor" replay the foreignness of "An old Photograph", inflected by the ancient (fairy) name for Stanley Hill by the Cathedral in the ancient capital of Kaledonoi, and the Scottish Art Council's creative writing centre in Kiltarlity, Inverness-shire, respectively. These snapshots promote ideas of rebirth and regeneration, and lead to themes of love in "Félicité et Perpétué" and "Floating", while "Anstruther" marks the mature voice of Burnside that "Epithalamium" develops as the guardian of his own prison. Thinking of this in terms of the exilic frontier, we are offered an expression of protagonist in two languages: floating and permanent, fluid and sturdy. Heaney calls this the "double capacity" of poetry to promote the security of the intimately known and the insecurity of the boundless ("Something To Write Home About", Finders 48). It is a resistance to terminus and marks a connection to the world "lying just beneath the surface and just beyond the horizon of the actual words we speak" (57-57). Here, continuing the poem of recollection and working ghosted selves into the environment, the border posits a direct consideration of the metaphysical space of possibility over a space-place opposition:

The far shore, that I used to think  
was somewhere strange,

the lighthouse that once seemed large  
and fishing boats beneath the harbour wall

are forming anew

within this fold of mist

more real than ever, harder and more precise,  
and nothing ghostly in the way

the cold welds to my skin  
and lets me know

how quick I am, how quick I have to be  
to go on walking, blindly, into silence. (11-22)

The Cellardyke shore between John Street and Burnside Terrace, which the poet visited in childhood and lived close to during the poem's composition is wrapped in haar and is transforming the poet's sensibility into a new point of relation (as with "Haar", TGN). In awareness of the construction of worlds (faith and knowledge) and "what little I / we know of houses" ("A Process of Separation", "Epithalamium") this clouded realm dissipates into the poet seeking reality in what he cares for. As with Williams' poetic it resonates with pronouns drawing identity from place and carries an autobiographical edge of making a new home and working to reconcile desire and love, an Americanist *human affirmation*, not revealed truth. It is captivated brilliantly in Williams autobiography and his reflections on the personal nexus of the precisionist, Charles Sheeler, moral transcendent significance in Shaker furniture, and alienation of resilient Russian exiles in the Hudson valley: "nothing can grow" he states "unless it taps into the soil" (Autobiography 334). Once more in Burnside, however, it comes from Stevensian blankness.

For Wordsworth, the ideal reader is "quick": both tutored and natural, and in cooperation with the world, much as the poem is a contingent, cognitive horizon hypnotically nudging the reader to formulate judgement (Prose 3:66). To Burnside, the word connotes holding fast to our being in time, as with Augustine's Confessions (397-398) and Heidegger's trilogical reading of vorstellen as place, standing, and understanding ("The Thing", Question). These are all

terms for reassessment yet intimately related to mastery of self without making it one's own. Furthermore, the final sense of "bodily" in the word suggests that the last lines are not the negative critique of missing the world through speed (or hastened modernity) but understanding the importance of the phenomenal world and the connections made when felt physically. This is Burnside coming out from the shadows of forebears and offering, perhaps, what could be termed in another paraphrase, 'how bodily one has to be to erase the self's mind and walk richly into the silent non-human dimension.' We have read this before but this is the first of many poems to a new dwelling, folding love and respect into a new sense of being. This voice cradles loose, flowing, and flowering couplets that prefigure TAD, and has an interesting, final presence in the climax poem.

### III.A.3. Epithalamium

The collection's long poem alludes to the ancient tradition of celebrating the wedding day, in which Sappho, Pinder, and later Catullus would deploy nymphs and shepherds to offer material vision to present what a modern reader would understand as the poet's personal joy. Burnside has chosen to preface his version with lines from the anonymous German folk collection Des Knaben Wunderhorn (The Boy's Magic Horn) to suggest negation of a divine or transcendental force.<sup>46</sup> The poem speaks of the distress of humankind, which in the afterword to the early nineteenth century collection by Achim von Arnim "the loss of vernacular culture [is likened to] the dwindling of the forests" (Rigby Topographies 222). Rigby reads this in the

---

<sup>46</sup> "Da kam ich auf einen breiten Weg; / da kam ein Engelein und wollt' mich abweisen, / Ach nein! Ich liess mich nicht abweisen!" ("I came to a wide road [broad path], where an angel appeared and wished to force me back: ah no, I will not be turned away!").



context of high Romanticism, particularly Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff and the rejection of pantheism and endorsement of ambivalent Catholic revelation latent in folk culture:

The physical world of nature, unredeemed by divine revelation, was potentially more malign than divine, its ceaseless whisperings speaking siren-like to our archaic inner nature, awakening longings that continually threatened to draw us away from the safe terrain of righteous living (222).

Rigby's penetration into Teutonic conservatism in the revolutionary Napoleonic age prefigures Burnside's use of the natural world's annunciation and his struggle with consciousness and perspective in an attempt to sustain the right connection to this presence in a world declining into ecological loss. These specific lines from section thirteen of The Magic Horn, "Urlicht" ("ancient light") promote the thematic concern upon dying and pain, going to heaven, wanting to be with God, and of God giving eternal light. I look at a few moments to see how this is affected.

"Shekinah" is the first phase in diluting or secularising the spiritual presence of God denoted in the Hebrew sense of the word. This opening poem belies the pastoral blend of myth and reality in its repetition of the phrase "I've heard" (1: 1, 9) turning away from the musical aspect of the element of myth. This personalized structural element falls away to the objective pronouns "It's" and "Its" (20, 27), indicating an emphasis on the world felt and world unseen: status, and (dis)possession respectively. This turn follows Burnside naming the towns of Fife: "Lochgelly" -- the deprived and isolated pit town; "Pittenweem" -- the fish market for Anstruther and only surviving working harbour of the East Neuk; "the Isle of May" -- home to the twelfth century monastery and modern national nature reserve; and "Markinch" -- famed for its sixth century preaching station, financially less independent since the recent closures of

the last paper-mill and the Haig whisky factory. The order of these places in the poem represents an easterly shift from Cowdenbeath to Anstruther, a biographical journey and marked change in the Fife landscape from the working-class underprivileged and forgotten towns to the Fife coastal tourist route and sustained industries. Markinch lies mid-way between these points and is in position to couple with the preaching ground emphasizing the fall from religion running after the fall from industry. The emphasis of the end geographies is not unusual; shadowed by the contemplation of nature (the Scottish National Heritage site since 1989) they carry through into the idea of dispossession. Furthermore, these places are named before the line "where floodlit tractors / labour and churn" (21-22) providing a complex vision of man wrestling with nature given Burnside's unique post-pastoral frame.

Right at this very juncture Burnside exchanges mechanical agitation for the differing forms of empathy that husband and wife have toward nature:

the way you feel the turning of the tide  
 beneath the house, or somewhere in the roof,  
 or how I sometimes linger on the stairs,  
 listening for nothing...  
 beguiled by the pull of the moon  
 and the leylines of herring. (33-36, 38-39)

The partner's tidal connection enfolds earth to sky while the husband's accomplicity is driven by the manifest energies of moon and sea, which details a sense of imprisonment in both while antagonism - underlined in the difference between "feel" and "beguiled", the intuitive and the self-deluded -- is rife. The antagonism and notion of dispossession, the fall from nature and industry, can be seen as resolved by following Burnside's structural logic.

The internal attunement of the first poem shifts into the husband wandering in "Heimweh" to denote remote longing and pain or

homesickness. Written famously by Lawrence in New Poems (1918), Burnside's version, rather than wishing the destruction of home from his memory, replays Lawrence's plea for destruction of home and self, shadowed by the critique of intellectual dehumanizing. The domestic scene is not charged in the way of the soldier at loss from his home identity, but its strength derives from within the frustration of home and lifeways as restrictive containment. Moreover, other than making the connection to Coleridge's "France: an Ode" (1798) upon the homesickness of the Swiss (Heimwahn) affected by the invasion of France, uniting themes of conservation and Republican politics (Bate Romantic 113-4), Burnside's momentary thought of leaving home and facing the sea is connate with a form of release or disappearance, another letting be. It is "weightless and clean, as if they have stepped away / to the near-angelic" (20-21), provided by nothing other than "the thought of distance, endless navigation" (16). It is a curious link to the German folk tale in that it suggests a denial of social consciousness (represented by the angel) in wishing to push the human spirit to its edge while also connecting to the domain of angels or the other worldly. With this in view the sense of entrapment, as with a lack of social conscience, begins to falter in the second phase.

The third poem to "Epithalamium", "After the Storm" recalls Hölderlin's feast day poem ("Wie wenn am Feiertage das Feld Zusehen") and suggests a connection to Burnside's theory that radical change such as an act of violence can "vouchsafe" the other world that is resident within the everyday. This finds "the intense stillness that comes thereafter" as a form of renewal where "the logic by which we live, day to day is [understood as] only a subset of a wider, more mysterious order" ("Travelling into the Quotidian" 61, 69), the Coleridgean reading of childish joy extending into human sympathy in maturity. This position derived from thoughts on freedom through

violence comes troubling close to the issues of SIF; however, this poem is content with trappings of habitat if a large sense of openness and connection is resident inside the dweller's mind and in the fabric(ation) of the house. Rather than an isolated home sheltering from the storm, Burnside views his home as a means to "what we might discover of ourselves" (25); knowledge:

more than a gust of rain, more than the wind,  
 more than the Halloween ghosts we might imagine.  
 Those animals that figure on the walls,  
 those creatures we imagine on the stairs  
 are real, and we must give them shapes and names,  
 feed them with blood and salt, fix them a bed,  
 make shift, make good, allow them this possession. (32-38)

Totemic consciousness charges this poem by working to dwell with things as a means to sustain the fiction or intuitive empathy that relinquishes human ownership. The inclusive subjective pronoun dominates the end of this poem while the natural world is abstract and general. The emphasis is on willed action as something giving to the world: to "feed" and "fix" is to nurture and construct but to "make shift" and "make good" has a double register. In the first instance, a decreased sense of a temporary schematic, 'makeshift' split in two, allows arrangement to live in its poverty of order and failed union, or the necessity of separation and division. In the second sense, less moral judgement than form of atonement, to hold one's place by reparation: to "fix them a bed". As an effort not to reduce energy but, as one notes the eleventh syllable spilling over the iambic prison, it is to give something its place in the world on its terms and its "possession", and thus develops SIF in totality.

Finally, the title "VIII Beholding" draws from Wordsworthian sensorial contemplation and Stevensian mental consideration while also suggesting the sense of obligation and engagement triggered by the epigraph from Williams in this collection. The poet's desire to

fill the day by gathering apples and making a fire to connect to the Halloween spirits is framed by the bedroom scene where the husband is awake and his love lies sleeping; it is a blurred world between monologue and dialogue:

Your hair is the colour of whey  
and your hand on the pillow is clenched, like a baby's fist  
on a figment of heat, or whatever you've clutched in a dream...

Now, suddenly, you're talking in your sleep,  
your face on the pillow like one of those paper masks  
we used to make in school, for Halloween,  
talking to someone you've dreamed, while your white hands  
fasten on something fragile or easily lost,  
a strand of hair, a ring, a stranger's arm,  
the promise you have to remember, that brings us home. (5-7, 34-40).

The insomniac wishes to apologize for his deliberately cruel and furnished way of viewing things. In turning to his partner, he idealizes her feminine dream-state rooted in the fluid and spiritual world and one able to move into his temporality. Yet the fabricated mask, the comparison of hair to milk, and the white hands portends a fragile, constructed surface; these represent neither idealized images of purity nor something simply opaque. When viewed as emptiness or transparency they bring the submerged world into relief. We are lead to read in this manner by extending the metaphor of rising to the surface of the waking state to capture the transitive world as the clutch or encirclement of something foreign; this echoes with the graveyard the poet desires to walk and enter beyond its façade, indicated by the conjunctive stress and contingent sense of alternatives in the use of "or" in this section:

or wander all day in the kirkyard, reading the names  
on strangers' graves: their plots laid side by side  
with those they loved and hated, those they feared;  
friends who betrayed them; children who watched them die.  
It's what they meant by coming to this place  
and choosing to remain, though decades fastened their hands  
to kindling and wire, and the dampness that seeped through

the walls  
all winter long. (26-33)

Outside musical arrangement, the eye follows the path of each poetic impression finally given Williams' voice in "all winter long" after prosaically imitating Wordsworth. This poem is problematical because of the conceptual aggregates that too easily lead and strangulate the poem. It is possible to read the concept of rambling without a fixed abode leading to a station of thought, which in turn leads to a (self-reflexive) comment upon predetermination ("what they meant"), echoed in the protagonist's casual roaming that leads towards a certain course, particularly an intellectual beholding of terminus and continuum. It needs to be more expansive and less self-reflexive: the materiality of the poem does not need to indulge in itself here but would be better to open out. The second, third, and fifth lines quoted here are metrically more determined than others but do not manage to underpin the semanteme of the whole passage. "Wander" meets "stranger" to the same degree that "fastened" meets "dampness" but other than this emphasis on foreignness and a shift to fluidity Burnside has only played with assonance in the 'w' sounds to bring "who" and "what" further away from the interrogative or demonstrative and into the diversity of "wander", "watch", and "wire". Here, within this music, the poetic line resists constructing a grammatical field or lexical depth; it is an understated moment where the covenant with world via phonetics undulates in proximity to the referential.

It can be read as a form of desert music, the un-use of song which is more successfully achieved across wide spaces. One feels a loose connection to Williams:

I have eyes  
  that are made to see and if  
they see ruin for myself



Here, Burnside's dense verse compels the reader to note a reverse in the imagery of nature and culture, from the tractor action of "churning" to this less manipulated, sinuous and graceful self. Moreover, reading the graves as a permanent resting point is humbled by finding that each deceased figure was once aware of the temporality innate to their fire making, fencing, and gathering. It is a Wordsworthian humbling of human predicament -- the temporal song -- while also connecting to the (more Modernist) suggestion of transformation and growth. The damp drawn from the sea replays water imagery undermining human construction and enhances an imaginatively palpable moment, which is normally not striking, for it evolves slowly. This element ties back to the shift from machine to hair, for it opens up the sense of time delivered by "all" folding into "wall". Division collapses between male, female, and life and death as the noun "kindling" develops into a process that delivers another noun suggesting progeneration in nature. This as with the entire poem is informed by the female presence and now enfolds a sense of bringing forth the young: "kindling" as bequest or willed transference -- it is a significant development from the son traumatized by the image of the father posited as dark figure negating confrontation in being turned away to the garden fire. This tight and understated meaning shows Burnside informing his sense of 'beholding' as both reference point (as obligation to dwell) and to move on, to encourage change and terminus

#### IV. Conclusion

SIF represents an awakening from the dream state of MOT. A detached and cinematic eye, which is not reducible to consciousness (or moral perspective), suggests that the lyricist has practised observing himself but now wishes to detach the self from observational agency



or dismantle the mental camera so as to witness the self and the other in the scene one composes and mediates. It has strong resonance with "Home at Grasmere" and the constitutive psychology leading towards inclusive wholeness, a state realized through understanding the necessity that humanity can be completely realized within inhumanity (Kroeber "Home").

Gathering and modes of reconnection pronounce Burnside's lyrical consciousness entering woods and rivers to enjoin the subterranean and deep impulse of life. There is neither retreat nor sanctuary from these journeys; in their discoveries they suggest that the pastoral is no longer a symbol of simple reconciliation. In SIF, there resides a post-modern vision of power in that there is no central discernable controllable locus. In ANS Burnside journeys into the Fife heartland and coastal villages to bring the human element back into the frame yet the journey of love and the filter of pain saves the inner drama of the self from solipsism or central union. ANS forwards transport above residence. This places the ego within the perspective of a community of human beings in turn emphasizing the difference between our social selves and how we are defined by love, where in the latter mode the factual is displaced by mystery and we are offered a "disinterested invocation" that is part of "self-renewing" (Burnside "Strong Words" 261).

This chapter has outlined dependency upon others and the level of human concern for others. How these relate to notions of recovery may differentiate the human from other beings but does not separate human existence from the world at large. In identifying the change from MOT's crepuscular mind while turning towards the children who are killed in SIF, one can read their literal abductions (and their metaphoric weight as lost primary sensibilities and revelations) to discover Burnside revisiting imperfect enlightenment but set within a context that denies the presence of God in nature's violence. This

works to shun a Manichean reading of (moral) experience while also emphasizing particular human attributes of the murderers and rapists; moreover, the notion of ethical good as absolute in theory is challenged by good and evil together in practice as a means not to underestimate nor obscure the infinite distribution of forces in the world. In turn, this brings into relief man's originality and the law. Later, in ANS, the investigation of life is not made via categories of "religion, politics and sociology", but as Redmond has suggested, through ignoring these counters (11). Thus, the focus on the human expands into a vision of the creativity of the human spirit, and how we continue to pair, make homes, and acknowledge tensions created by these pacts. I read this collection outplaying Burnside's theme of living as "the tragedy of attachment [that is] an essential and beautifully human predicament" ("Iona" 22, 23): an aspect which love clarifies as the contours of human existence but must negotiate the undertow of violence or discrimination therein. While the title poem suggests further contemplation behind life's mechanisms, these ideas are (amongst others) wrapped into a conceptual container of the domestic arrangement, partnerships, and solitude to bring into relief the frustrations and distractions of the inhabited and relational world. It is from here that Burnside can move closer to notions of dwelling and ecology.

#### 4. Dwelling

TAD represents the constitutive psychology of community via the (historically) inclusive poetics of place offering an emergent discovery of self. A Wordsworthian context accounts for this yet a richer textual ecology including Scottish and American influences scaffolds a reading of Burnside's empirical and speculative itinerant wanderings driven by understated contemplation of transhumance and permanence. This combination suggests the need to commute involvement beyond phenomenological perception resolved into impressions or ideas, yet poetic limitations in consciousness being reduced, in part, to language or context are evident, too.

#### I. Introduction

TAD provides further insight into how Burnside's poetic forms and patterning drive his creative engagement with home, most especially with fluid and expansive modalities, both striking and remarkable in the lead poem "Ports". David Morley's reading of GS indicates a new direction in Burnside's attention to "networks of panic and longing ["Ny-Hellsund: '6: Going Back'" 12]" alongside "scavenger warmth / emerging from the cold ["By Pittenweem: 'V: Beginning'" 43-44]". These are too easily confined to separate realms labelled human and animal, the cognitive and the intuitive -- I am not equating mental ecology with epistemology, and physical ecology with ontology, here, but am suggesting that a lack of foundational distinction between mental and physical is of interest to Burnside (cf. Merleau Ponty, Bateson). In extension to my critical interpretation of Burnside's earlier poetry, this non-opposition infused with Lawrentian theological negative capability underpins identity derived from an ecological nexus of history and place. It is the attempt to reconcile wholeness with localized textures. The sensibility I map here has dark and light combined, and negates the utopian, Zoroastrian prevailing of light: the "severity of outlook" in Robert Creeley, Frost, Dickinson, and Williams (Kleinzahler) therefore, is echoed in Burnside's "black in the green" ("Fields" 1: 43), which is a modernized version of Wordsworth "not dreaming of muffled life"

("Home At Grasmere" (conceived as Book 1 of The Recluse) 428).<sup>48</sup>

However, within this realm of neutral humanism the poetry begins to problematize stance in terms of form and content, setting itself up to undermine its objectives as a form of dispelling the singularly anthropogenic. The latter poem that Morley chooses above, uses the metaphor of low temperature for an insecure home frontier (due to interchangeable identities), emphasized by being "not really bound to this place, / but here by choice: / pledged to the first thaw" (1: 26-28) an oscillation rescued into mutability by another force ("private use" 32)/ This could denote poetic construction and vagrancy in the logos while also being comforted by mutability. I read this recalling Wordsworth's "cold" of the "Realities of Life" that are "more bountiful than hope" (Home 54, 58). Recognizing this as being situated between the faith in imagination and the faith in world is the most vital and necessary starting point for understanding this aesthetic.

Morley is correct to view the presentation of these themes under an original aspect -- the post-dwelling trilogy forms. However, to argue that GS indicates the inexactness of Burnside's deployment of language as something new (88) is incorrect: I have viewed this within negative poetics as an issue of great importance following MOT and am arguing that this reaches a particular importance in the phenomenological language of TLT. Yet here, in TAD, the Romantic notion of a self transparent to self and dependant upon language that Burnside has wrestled with since FD, is implicit (yet understated) in the poet's attention to the made lyric in relation to human practice and involvement. The ecocritical need to explicate kinship, husbandship, and sustainability are terms that resonate on the periphery of Burnside's consideration of human techne, an analogon to

---

<sup>48</sup> All references to "Home At Grasmere" follow Darlington's editorial to MS.B. Hereafter referenced as Home.



Lutheran shroud of the poem "Settlements" and the Heideggerian concealment of world and divine as that which offers the true quest where the science of dwelling is *discovery*, and thus estrangement from what is already known. An emphasis on source seems to contradict madeness; however, while the emphasis on the body over the soul suggests traces of life in decay (mould) and tracks (spoor), these elements are a single path connoting "loose" and "friable" earth (OED) symbolic of the necessary historicity of human life which is means to promote that which is ripe for *further cultivation*. It is the theme highlighted by labour in the gardens (section 2 and 3) and denotes something operating beyond and yet within all contingency.

The section quoted begins with the sense of vision "immers[ing]" (7) world and brings the reader back to an engagement with Wordsworthian natural spontaneity for speech, yet promoting stuttering or jagged contemplation as accentuated by the broken lines, unsettled pauses in thought and image ("All I can tell" echoes with "I can't recall" (1: 66)), and uncertain recognitions within the deployment of alternatives. There is consonance with Wordsworth's imprecision ("cannot", "seemed", Home 3, 35,) suggesting the need to take inspiration yet not dependency from memory and history: it is forgetfulness that raises an anchor and beautifies the soul (386-87). Furthermore, "or" is used thirteen times in the poem; in this section it resonates with "foreign" and in its mirrored expansive opening section (framing the two dense middle sections) it bleeds into "chore" to promote the domestic procedure and the observance of human integration into larger (alienated) patterns. What it means to present this rich emotional feeling in words without the naked dignity of simplicity in the post-Wordsworthian lyric suggests to the critical reader how the poetic medium can, if at all within a lexis of uncertainty, connect to the creative source of life as a means to

"renaturalize human sentiment" (Harrison Forests 157) a predicament heightened by constructionist poetics. The coexistence of things in the poet's mind can be seen in discord, "to feed / or die" (Burnside), but as man takes over the creative process his attempt to secure living energy beyond the finitude of language is assisted only in the advancing of possibility -- this is the only naturalizing that can take place. It is thus that Burnside's use of the conjunction can be viewed rhyming deliberately with "spoor" to suggest a route where the ineffable "something" is not given a noun but provided with many potential possibilities, the unnamed signified imbued with multiple aspects delivered through the conjunction. These possibilities lie within the mind's conception of world and its fleeting moments of anchorage. It is Burnside's awareness of phenomenology here -- that which is critiqued as something purely subjective and lacking democratic access without context, as in the use of the metaphor of transcendence and isolation resting above the "known world" -- that suggests contradictions within this poetic 'centring'. The poet and poem dwell in the logos but that is a site of estrangement itself from the transitory quickness of mind in the temporal mood: a motif that resonates with the larger human condition that we inhabit estrangement when we stay in one place (Harrison Forests 265).

This intelligence within the poem is a healthy extrapolation of the fact that the one constant is change, an incursion on our non-relativist values greeted most tenderly and skilfully with circular merging and complex echoes in this poem. The voice of "Fields" is an amalgam of biological mirrors, which not unlike Kroeber's Wordsworthian "interanimations of memories and prophetic intuitions" (Ecological 55) instances poetics and identity driven through correlation of the living voice with the dead, where "a new life burrows free", (Burnside 4: 58) half-seen yet within "the pull of the

withheld". It suggests that consciousness is only partly reduced to world but what is beyond the linguistic? I have spoken of a structure that undermines itself or willingly fails to live up to its expectations, and I have spoken of absence, the withheld, possibilities, and estrangement through what is made. This poem offers itself as an example of Burnside's anti-poetic, where the foregrounding of these abstract notions through the poem (but only in its relations between stanza, section, volume and oeuvre, rather than by image, metaphor, or self-contained poetic arc) suggests that the greater poesis is not operating in "Fields" but that the poem is a centre as much as it is a vortex and an absent nexus: "Fields" is an unfinished and open space for the poet's and reader's muse to gather resources and create relations, an affordance for the contingent and futurity, the site of our fictions. Wholeness, therefore, is temporal and spatial.

This version of creative evolution, while not a direct denotation of pantheism, is reminiscent of Burnside's idea of "soul energy" ("Iona" 23) reminding new readers of Wordsworth (and as suggested by my reading of Stevens as inspirational figure to Burnside) by connecting the poetics back to a co-creative Orphic poet, "Working but in alliance with the works / Which it beholds" (The Prelude 2: 274-5). In "Fields" I read this being an alliance of culture and nature resulting in the poem offering movement, fluidity, and alienation from stations of thought paradoxically enveloped in a compressed lyric that desires larger unfolding and openness than the human can offer alone.<sup>49</sup>

In Home Wordsworth constructs a lyric that forwards the dynamic mutability of mind and world, and embraces the "guardianship" (31) of

---

<sup>49</sup> Wordsworth's use of "behold" River Duddon Sonnet 32 (11) is given terms of fluidity over "lingering" (2) within earth that is "opened" (10) and seen from a particular sense of "afar" (11).



the other, as both contentment with one's lot and an accommodation of discord. It is the poetics of re-integration conceived as "Something that makes this individual Spot" (164), the human relation to land within the poetic mind. The "willed drive to make his life march in step with his art" (Sharrock 167) is achieved by the poet forwarding how humans can be stirred by the "motions" (Wordsworth Home 25) of the place within its "bounds" (42) i.e. "psychic freedom... assimilated into an awareness of the flow of time" (Kroeber "Home" 133). The boundary that is alive to its internal history instances "plenitude [as] a function -- paradoxically -- of the Vale's limitations" (Kroeber Ecological 54) in Wordsworth; it is attained through "an act / Of reason", an historic consciousness that is "without restraint" (Home 33). The mind that can see clearly and commute "inherent things from casual / What is fixed from fleeting" (131-32) offers a mirroring of human and nature that can "lift the animal being" (673) without recourse to a naïve pastoralism but enters "the grounding of sensory experience in conscious wholeness of being" (Kroeber Ecological 54). One can read this influence Burnside's poetics.

#### I.A. The Attempt at an Ecological Voice

Burnside's return to Scotland after twenty-eight years charges TAD with what W. N. Herbert has praised as the Scottish spiritual psyche and meditative eulogy offering the thought that "Culture grows through the slow interaction of a sensibility with a location and its people" ("Coast"). To what level of accuracy human perception can act as an exact witness to the world's changes highlights the intense pressure that the phenomenological and ecopoetic lexicons operate under. Moreover, the question Morley pronounces, "What is the nature of a dwelling made of those particles called words?" (87), appears to

be the essence of the period between 2000 and 2006. In this period, Burnside's poetry takes particular caution to acknowledge the presuppositions that phenomenological poetics exploits and is dependant upon. Much like Wordsworth, Burnside posits that telling and listening are by necessity part of the greater relation that is man's 'throwness' or comportment to world: "strangers" (Wordsworth Home 34) dispossessed in the logos but intersubjectively aligned. Aligned to the fact that disowning is balanced by the sustenance of creative interplay. Sharing place and history is something that is achieved not by having nature presented before one, but realized as Wordsworth says, "when I move" (995), something that reads unity within dynamics and beyond perceptual realities by drawing from the temporal and historical constitutive psychology of community "liberat[ing] man" from "perceptual responsiveness" (Kroeber 140).

## II. Dwelling

Adorno argued that dwelling in the twentieth century is impossible; that the modern house disconnects man from his environment and that the best mode of conduct is "an uncommitted, suspended one" ("Refuge for the Homeless" Minima 39). In the context of possession and consumer culture Adorno notes that it is "part of morality not to be at home in one's home" and that man has lost "the principle of... limitation". How one is to disregard things and yet care for the world and how man can be reconciled to a form of alienation as a form of limitation upon and clarification of the human, is the Judaeo-Christian dwelling plight written in terms of a revised virtue ethics. Burnside faces this head on. In TAD, life is not written as the satisfaction of desire but an acknowledgement of ever moving temporal aspiration where the integrity of solitude meets the compromise of belonging, and beyond Wordsworth's understanding of

discord as completeness within the sanctuary of home, any fixed station is viewed in tension with the lure of escape.

## II.A. Ecologies of Home

Seamus Heaney's retreat to County Wicklow in 1972 was one of the most significant journeys of an Irish or British poet of the last century. Burnside's move to Anstruther in 1994, while less easily politicized, is one that not only motivates his non-nationalist and non-regionalist stance ("Standards"; Dosa interview 17) but emphasises his position that flatly refuses to deploy the metaphor of the fabric of the Scottish nation, yet also offers land ownership as key to self-determination ("Parliament"; Dosa interview 15, 17) and makes an identification between Celtic and American cultures above ideas of Scottishness (McGonigal Water 236-7). Burnside negates an anchoring in the British tradition by turning to Robert Frost and American ideas of home to deliver his particular conceptualization of place in TGN, extended in the deployment of John Donne's metaphysical metaphor of the exploration of America in "Varieties of Religious Experience" in GS. However, an asylum culture in TAD that continues to press upon Burnside's poetry leads from a fresh engagement with Wordsworth, which needs unravelling.

### II.A.1. Wordsworth and Stevens

While Bate aligns Burnside to Stevens for his resistance to project upon the inanimate and his persistence in conceiving the material foundation of world as sacred ("Eco Laurels"), Karl Kroeber dispenses with any correlation between Stevens and his Romantic forbear on an aesthetic level, the supreme artifice of fiction being "finally, foreign to Wordsworth's ecological-anthropological enterprise" (Ecological 61). Before I move into a consideration of Wordsworth's

return to Grasmere to precede my reading of Burnside, a little clarification and reminder of this thesis' foundation is required and should be read as paramount. The British Romantics read by Bate and Kroeber have three particular qualities: (i) imaginative subjectivity, where thoughts are constitutive of emotions and the capacity for simultaneous joy and suffering shapes poetic approaches to subjects; (ii) attention to need, desire, independence, and society as degrees of mutually constitutive psychology, which attunes poetic approaches toward holism in terms of an attention to individual elements, reads each contributor involved as part of a historically constituted state of affairs and therefore as a responsible agent: Burnside has called this "narrative interplay" ("The Wonder of Daylight" 60) and it has resonance with Romantic civic preoccupation where actions have specific consequences, and resonance with ecosystem integrity derived from individuated organisms; (iii) the awareness of this poetic sensibility in contrast to a rational and impersonal industrialization inherent to Romantic representations of identity. Burnside is clearly aware of this. The pitfall in extending the concerns of mind into a solipsistic or forgetful project of emancipation in the post-industrial age has been clarified:

Romanticism is probably dangerous for someone like me. My recent poetry has a sense of the sacramental, an affirmation of transient physical being, but with nothing transcended (Hopkin interview).

Speaking with TAD and TLT in mind, Burnside identifies materialism antagonistic to Platonism and pietism charged against Romantic Idealism while also pitching his work against criticism that has identified Romanticism as forwarding the private consciousness as distinct from phenomena. For Burnside and Wordsworth consciousness and phenomena are inter-relational, the dynamic between the two

constitutes a sense of home and the site of the soul.

One can read Wordsworth's use of the wind and the clouds in Home - symbols of the imagination and identity carried and infused by a larger force -- bringing the human into relief but not positing human consciousness or dwelling as fixed and entirely separate from nature. Being distinct from the natural elements and independent from the wind and yet through imaginative (and historic) acquaintances, Home is where discord is recorded and accounted for, much like commonness is seen as complete in the poem. It is where human technology is both apart from the fluid, organic world, and is configured rationally to enable one to read of our *motional* enclosure in fellowship, albeit if that is "remembrance of a jarring world" (Wordsworth 836), a "neutral exposition" (Sharrock 168) and acceptance of discordance in itself. This edge provides the poet with an understanding of nature and mind as mutable, derived from the evolving interaction between humans and environments. This is where Burnside and Wordsworth meet, but there is also America.

Tell me, Ramon Fernandez, tell me, if you know  
 Why when the singing ended and we turned  
 Toward the town, tell why the glassy lights,  
 The lights in the fishing boards at anchor there,  
 As the night descended, tilting in the air,  
 Mastered the night and portioned out the sea,  
 Fixing emblazoned zones and fiery poles,  
 Arranging, deepening, enchanting night. ("The Idea of Order at  
 Key West" 44-51)

Stevens' poem looks for more "ghostlier demarcations" (56) of the scene than those driven by human technologies of mastery and fixing: he wishes for the mirror over the lamp. Stevens' understanding comes from dispossession and from knowledge of the cost and the pragmatic role of human mediation and artifice. The posed question is a plea for a non-theoretical and non-appropriative representation of the referent reduced to the context for the human song. It is

underwritten by irony and the principle that to be certain (fundamental) is to be incorrect. Burnside reconsiders this via the light trap -- how world appears to mind:

In daylight it would seem  
 almost absurd:  
 too sentimental  
                   gauche  
                           inaccurate  
 a weekend sailor's image of the sea  
  
 but now  
           as snow descends into the rings  
 of torchlight  
                   and the sky above the harbour  
 darkens  
           it is only what it seems. ("Ports" 3: 89-100)

One notes an inquiry into labour in this collection, although qualified in this early instance suggesting elevation of thorough, vocational work. The boat named "Serenity" epitomizes our constructed sense of home born from desire and loss, while reflecting upon how personal psychology is representative of a larger mass; for Kroeber, that is to acknowledge "how we may live discoveringly" (Ecological 81). The image arrives at the end of a poem concerned with the endurance of life over this enjoyment and with how we fit into the natural scheme of things, perhaps overemphasized by "inaccura[cy]" of the reporting faculty. Here, the need to *discover within the mind* is also unmistakably matched to Stevens and the desire to *live in the spirit* as one that attempts to marry what "seems" to being, or to what "is".

#### II.A.2. Grasmere at Home

John Kerrigan finds three phases in Wordsworth's sonnets: (i) a troubled temporality where clouded vales offer him no lodging in "transient and unattainable dwellings" (47) that signify the "unhomeliness of human homes" (48); (ii) the restrained orbicular

mode where graveyards provide his "last Central Home" ("Tuft of Primroses" 1808), an immutability I have touched upon in the period of writing upon epitaphs; and (iii) the latter phase, 1814-1850, of "heavenly dwelling...detached from that web of worldly circumstance" (51). The first reemphasizes the New Testament claim that homelessness is man's proper state. Kerrigan cites the book of Matthew and it is in Matt. 8.20 that Jesus remarks that unlike the foxes and birds, man has nowhere to rest. This restlessness coupled to the notion of letting only the spiritually dead bury their dead families (8.22) promotes this chapter as one considering both the cost and testing of discipleship and as one offering an extreme poverty. This contrasts with the latter phase of Wordsworth's sonnets losing the imaginative grasp and lending themselves to abstraction. It is thus that the middle phase is most relevant to TAD and my reading sustains the Worsworthian impulse identified earlier, the epitaphic consciousness born from a sense of history that infuses the 'I' into the site of cognition.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> The voice of Home is constructed in threefold: (i) the Wordsworthian sense of (personal) history and return (to place), forwarded as frame in the opening passage and as unity across first and third person, subjective and objective; (ii) the phenomenological experience reflected in nature, as with the fast and swirling passage on birds (278-301) offering coiled dynamism in world that evokes *and is mirrored by* an orbital consciousness where the human impulse can construct "An art, a music, and a stream of words / That shall be life" (621-22); and (iii) the balanced construction of universal tensions or combinations by interweaving oppositions. These are resident in the dark and light passages, e.g. difficult snow (216-239), darkness (257-277), and the missing swans (322-357) coupled to Dorothy and William as domestic pairing, while also resident in the domination of the historic tales that inject feelings into the poetry in the second half of the poem. These instil how discoveringly and responsively "persons [abide] like the place" (404). The co-creative poetics of concert is what Kroeber calls "an ecological unity" and "rhythmic continuity" ("Home" 132). The tales are the embodiment of the human history of the locus; through a promotion of both "Labour" (Wordsworth Home 440) as integrated technique of the human, and the sense of faith pushing through hard times, they are symbolic of Wordsworth's sense of intimacy "which lay within our reach" (201) in its earthly, animated, and married world: that which the human is "in the midst of" (236). This is particularly accentuated in the tales that take tension and complementation as subject and form where the

Kroeber's sense of 'holiness' as constitutive psychology derives from Wordsworth's emphasis on inclusive wholeness, this comes from dwelling in mind, resting in thought as well as building a home:

I forgot  
My haste, for hasty had my footsteps been. (Home 6-7)<sup>51</sup>

Kroeber reads this as more complex than a substitute for religious experience (Ecological 53). The human can play within the greater "intercourse of knowledge" (Wordsworth Home 756), promote growth as the true constant (over change), and can act out figures within the dynamic settlement of society, "deliberately fitting oneself into a natural organization consciously discerned and appreciated" (Kroeber

---

Wordsworthian fusing of disparate tales of union and breakdown is a creative collocation of history and discord (over ornamentation and resolution), concert with the motion of the place in Home, "the interplay between the poet's inner, imaginative life and his sensations", Kroeber argues, "his impressions of external realities in the circumambient vale" ("Home" 133).

<sup>51</sup> I read two significant late interjections during 1812-1814, when Wordsworth reconstituted ideas afresh in resumption of his work on the abandoned text (Wordsworth Home 25). Before Wordsworth makes the claim of fitting world to mind in the prospectus, he adds a plea to his addressee and a qualification to his imagined ideal state: "Forgive me" (MS.D 692) is an acknowledgement of his intense craft isolating him from his partner. Home considers craft while contemplating that the world has offered itself to him as material for more than history or fiction; it states that these paradisiacal neighbours, once considered "of old / In the deep ocean" (MS.B 997-8), become like those "of old / Sought in the Atlantic Main" (MS.D 801-802). MS.D represents a deepening of his position in "Tintern Abbey" with the poet of his early forties having more than twenty years to reflect on the beginning of the French Revolution (1789) and thirty years of consideration of the end of the American War of Independence (1783). The emphasis on America here (MS.D) suggests an unrealized ideal with greater potential, the source for his imagination in social and political idealism coming from a chief principle without the vale. However, I choose MS.B over MS.D for the following reasons: (i) the opening in first person over third person emphasizes "Place" over "Station" (MS.B 17, cf. MS.D 17); (ii) solitude is his possession (MS.B 83) rather than an invitation of nature (MS.D 71); (iii) while both manuscripts state that the protagonist "cannot take possession of the sky" (MS.B 288, cf. MS.D 199) the former engenders attention that can "Rest" (MS.B 105) rather than "Fix" (MS.D 105). Respectively: geography over mind; willed involvement not passivity or repose; gentle possession over unethical enframing. This trajectory qualifies Wordsworth's term "Mount with a thoughtless impulse" (MS.B 289, MS.D 200).



"Home" 135), lacking concern of cultural contamination to a degree in its acceptance of the historical record as continuity of man's creative accounts.

In ANS, readers came to a new understanding of "quick" as the purchase of self outside possession and as lyrical allusion to the endowment of a larger life than singularity affords -- either that singularity of the isolated individual, or the derealization of external world via poetic singularity. Here, Wordsworth commutes similar potential in the individual spirit, something realized through the combined efforts of integration with place and reciprocity with fellow dwellers, in turn delivering self-sufficient personhood:

..the heart  
Breathe in the air of fellow-suffering  
Dreadless (448-50)

Labour marries human to the "native element" (451) and as a reflection on craft suggests re-integration of "other solitudes" (459), the consolidation and unity of historic records of place as part of how we fit into the nature: an emphasis on the prize within (166), which understands suffering within the context of community and withholding.

Wordsworth's move in December of 1799 into Dove Cottage, Grasmere, until 1808, for Bate, was a claim to home if read via Home as a particular dominion derived outwith possession (Romantic 101-2): an aesthetic between "a naturalized 'dwelling poem' and an 'alienated' prospect poem" (103). Contrast Burnside:

I still can't resist the girls on the promenade  
walking the front in lipstick and brand-new hairdos  
the boys from the caravan parks come out  
to stand in the bars all night  
like their father's ghosts  
sullen and proud

and as lost in the world they inherit  
 as stray dogs  
     or mink  
  
 and forgive me  
     that I cannot leave or stay  
 that I'm only a moment away  
     from being unseen  
  
 forgive me  
     being not the man I seem  
 not lost or found  
     but somewhere in between. ("Roads" 5: 94-110)

This is not the human quashed by temptation but it is a figure of the poet who has habits and recollections that dispute and anchor his wandering impulse, resonating with the claim that "I've never really mastered coming home" (86), that is disowning an idea of final salvation. "In between", unhyphenated, deconstructs the sense of an interval and intermediate space or time, potentially suggesting intervention more than temporality. It is tentative. The voice is aware of the danger of slipping into a linguistic frame where "being" becomes unseen once more, while simultaneously asserting contemporary purchase through experiences imaginable to a wide audience of urban dwellers. The wholeness of the local as a version of Wordsworthian holiness, in-between Bate's two states, is under consideration in my reading of TAD and Burnside's fossil record of cultural memory.

## II.B. Post-Pastoral Syncretism

William McTaggart's double-bind is the arrival and preaching of St Columba and the departure of Scots to the Americas, witnessed in The Coming of St. Columba (1897, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh) and The Sailing of the Emigrant Ship (1897, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh). It brings together the events of 1,300 years separation to consider spiritual intervention and the creation of

Celtic civilisation lost to material plundering.<sup>52</sup> I find this important to the Scottish notion of asylum as understood by the artist Will Maclean who is a significant presence in Burnside's collection. His extension of McTaggart's project within these terms enables a foothold on Burnside's poem "The Unprovable Fact: A Tayside Inventory" that emphasizes the cultural psyche that tempers TAD. His collaboration with Burnside shows how both artisans can be seen responding to the post-World War Two poets, Iain Crichton-Smith, Sorley MacLean, and George Mackay Brown and their concentration on a local and particular place mindful of the national and international political landscape, local texture reconciled to wholeness.<sup>53</sup>

Sorley MacLean's poetic speaker has been read as an interior debater of fragmentation drawn from a Presbyterian-Marxist conflict and Scottish resolution to scientific rationalism in confrontation with mystery (Gifford Green 72-93), rather than misunderstood as the mediation of a transcendent ordering power beyond human understanding. Heaney reads this better by understanding what Terry Gifford has termed the "history of struggle, which has a continuity in the present" in place-naming evoking history on the scale of visionary objectivity (Pastoral 108). Heaney calls this "high romantic voltage" ("Introduction" 1) twinned with modern guilt or "a self-castigating intelligence" (7); a sensibility that he views in Hugh MacDiarmid, Frost and Stevens ("Bog"). It is how limitation (of human) leads to exaltation (of world) without dispelling subjectivity. As with Burnside's extension to Wordsworthian craft it understands how pathos derived from relationships in the mature being is not a substitute for the unthinking, irresponsible joys of

---

<sup>52</sup> I follow Errington's dates. See Lindsay Errington, William McTaggart 1835-1910 (1989).

<sup>53</sup> See Louisa Gairn, "Aspects of Modern Scottish Literature and Ecological Thought," (2005). I would add Norman MacCaig (1910-1996) to this antecedence.

childhood that disappear. It is a *continuation* of spiritual presence, how sorrow of the "emotional geography" leads to "spiritual geology" (Heaney "Introduction" 4).<sup>54</sup>

From McTaggart to Sorely MacLean, Scots consider how fragile and miraculous memory and evocation are in exactly the frame outlined by Heaney. Will Maclean's found object art in Driftworks connects at a very deep level with Burnside's poetics in "The Unprovable Fact: A Tayside Inventory". There the worldview of matter is not at one with geometrical intensity but is like artistry that has been articulated in ecological terms by Garrard: an historical portal whose residual nature provides access to lost cultures and opens new views on the present self ("Heidegger"). Burnside's poems appropriate this mechanism for apocalyptic vigour. The death-toll of man's technological deployment is evoked in Maclean inserting three ghostly hooded fishermen within the 'medicinners' section of the illustrated poem. The 'fishers' identities are fused to gulls' skulls, the skeletal fish-men inserted to comment upon the collapse of fishing communities and their unrelenting social consequences rather than a celebration of modern science. These three figures are echoed in the illustration to 'surveyors' where three angels oversee the earth. The middle figure holds a globe scarred with cartographic reference points. As a symbol of the model of positivist philosophy, or bad science, which either "deny or repress the existence of subjective space, intersubjective space, or 'human' space and phenomenologically objective space" (Priest 7), the exposed vanishing points of humanist Newtonian cosmic geometry (the lines of longitude and latitude) destroy eternity through taxonomy and dissection. By contrast, it

---

<sup>54</sup> I refer readers to Coleridge's reflections on Wordsworth's immortality ode, in Biographia Literaria (1817) 1:58, in conjunction with the reflections in chapter fourteen. See Kathleen M. Wheeler's Sources Process and Methods in Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, 1980.

recalls Burnside's version of the shell, the inhabited pebble that outstrips geometrical vision (Bachelard 47) and is, in Williams words, neither imprisoned nor "impressed by the 'laboratory'" ("Deep Religious Faith" 50-51, The Desert Music, 1954).

Through Maclean a dark and indelible surreal narrative turns the age of discovery into an agent of homelessness. How this relates to spiritual dwelling could be read through engagement with Wordsworth but I would like to universalize this by extrapolating fresh insight through Moore and Heidegger. For the latter, the biggest devaluation of spiritual thinking is not the positing of God as 'unknowable' or his existence as 'unprovable' but by those whose posit faith in God as the highest value without having considered Being fully (Question 105). For Burnside and Will Maclean, to work from the concept of the unprovable is to negate unspirited negative poetics. The authoritative light posited by Burnside throughout the dwelling trilogy is Wordsworthian immanence of subjectivity or intersubjective and historically conceived values, offered through the singular point of view in "The Unprovable Fact: A Tayside Inventory". Perspectives across bodies of men from explorers to husbandmen promote progression towards intimacy and feeling from detachment and objectivity in this poem. The array of labourers evokes the environmental understanding in "The Valley Plan of Civilisation" (1925) by Patrick Geddes<sup>55</sup>. While harnessing the movement index (i.e. dynamics and freedom) that Geddes gives to landsman and sea-farer before being armed, Burnside is keener to extend this out of the contemplation driven by social sciences and biology to resist the frame of Scottish particularity. One is asked to withdraw a little.

---

<sup>55</sup> Patrick Geddes, Spokesman for Man and the Environment, ed. Marshall Stalley (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers UP, 1972).

## II.B.2. Epigraphs

Collocating the closing remarks made by Heidegger in "Building Dwelling Thinking" to the Darmstadt symposium on "Man and space" in August, 1951, beside the final lines of Marianne Moore's response to a gift from Elizabeth Bishop in February, 1940, transposes these texts and forwards a modernized single move reminiscent of Wordsworth's Home: that love should be considered if it is enough to secure us in respect to the dwelling plight.<sup>56</sup>

Burnside reported that Moore was the first poet he read who inspired him to write poetry himself ("Dead Poets"); his use of her poem, "The Paper Nautilus", regarding Bishop as protégé is the more poignant for the dedication of his volume to mentor and editor, Robin Robertson. An idea of inheritance and forbearance as anxiety within the eternal recurrence of power struggles reconfigures the issue of tradition and individual talent. However, the master-slave dialectic (the revolutionizing of modes of relation, the Marxian view of solidity that becomes unfixed) does not perfume the sanctuary of asylum in the poetry to the greatest degree -- a post-Romantic sensibility which resonates with ideas of nativeness, venerability, and promise of speciation owns this space.

Burnside takes the closing lines to What Are Years (1941), Moore's collection that meditates upon time, mortality, and eternity, through birds, animals, and speech, alongside poems upon restriction and possibility as signified by the title poem, which is an act of "willed control, not contingencies" (White Hadas 54). Moore's verse is renowned for its elaborate logical structures and tight-rope syllabic meters. However, towards the end of "The Paper Nautilus" Moore shifts the pattern from syntactic linearity to spatial forms

---

<sup>56</sup> See Moore Letters 381, 382, 388; and Bishop Letters 57-59, 89 and Prose 131. "The Paper Nautilus" first published as "A Glass-Ribbed Nest" in The Kenyon Review, 2 (Summer 1940): 287-8.

sympathetically shadowed in the images that come towards the end (folds in the horse's mane, wasp-nest detachments) and offers prescient counters for understanding *poetic movement*. The poem moves toward openness in both form and metaphor: it distils space and freedom to offer a site in which the poet allows the other (her protégé) to emerge. It resonates with the Heideggerian ecopoetic (of earth concealed as other) that I have been outlining in this thesis. Moreover, the poeticized guardian-like pelagic, surface-dwelling cephalopod mollusc presents love and freedom, inner and outer, motherhood and artistic creation while also promoting identity founded in independence: I discover an American patriotism turned toward individuals and then toward the natural world. This is wrought reciprocally by the unifying symbol of the paper nautilus, something complementary or relational to Wordsworthian accumulative integration. Its significance cannot be understated.

### III. On the Way to the Poems

Heidegger's Darmstadt lecture, delivered at the height of a great housing shortage and upon the eve of the sixth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, in the Hessen city severely damaged during the Second World War, is unmistakably a political statement on technology. It confers that merely building more houses does not give thought to the primal condition of being human. It is here that the poetic expression of architecture -- that of making place -- is considered as a means to situate the human i.e. give grounding and meaningful context as an ethos or domain out of which things appear or are made possible. As an applied and relational version of Wordsworthian meaning where the topographic and bodily enfold (over the absolute and relative) it could be termed 'emplacement' if it involved what Heidegger insists that we have nothing but: history,

time, and language. These three causal operators are given free play in Burnside's four hub poems: "Ports", "Settlements", "Fields", and "Roads". The poems instigate my analysis and highlight my emphasis throughout this thesis on technique as a means to show inclusivity and the mental cartography of locating one's place within the world.

### III.A. Ports

The lead poem to the collection names two boats discovered by the wandering poet, *Research* and *Serenity*, which predicate the themes of discovery and the notion of satisfaction or emotive settlement. These names indicate that the poetry draws from a two-fold consideration of whether (i) interfaces between these two realms are necessary, and (ii) which direction dependency runs between them. These are not resolved in the poems but are coexistent, as in Kroeber's identification of living "discoveringly" (Ecological 81). In Home Wordsworth brokered an ecological voice by interweaving disparate elements to offer the imagination to exercise creative synthesis while ensuring that each individual element is not equated but given clarification of its own singular contributive elements. Stevens understands that the sum of humanly created perceptual experiences overrides the Romantic reading of mind over world, in turn allowing a site for the "creative listener" (Voros 10). In Burnside, the last boat is "what it seems", a label "for something wanted / and believed" ("Ports" 100-102), thus desire and faith are indelibly linked by metaphor to the perceptual realm and to what is given. The tension or interdependency watermarks this collection and Burnside's consideration of labour, identity, and death give the relationship its first treatment here.

The poem opens this volume with a mischievously playful double-bound allusion to poetic heritage. Dialogic imagination is given



over to the first three words homed in a separate line, "Our dwelling place" and lead to shoreline considerations of shelter, the sky, gulls, and the road behind the shore-facing houses of Burnside's home in Cellardyke. "Tolbooth Wynd" (10) ends the first sentence. Its indistinct reference and common name for a customs office near docklands, however, opens up our thoughts on naming and on trade (metaphorical operators for ownership). The first of these follows the background theme of self-reflexive mind and irony, the poem as construction. Coming hard after "forecasts / gossip / theorems" (3-5) it forwards the difficulty of linguistic foundation: "the choice of a single word to describe / the gun-metal grey of the sky". Difficult, for the light from the firth is catching the play of birds and one word will not do justice to the creative dynamic presented to the poet who must move with world. The painterly dark grey is indistinct and dull yet offers a tint of blue, the vertical symbolic colour of imagination (Hölderlin, Stevens, Bergson). It needs dwelling upon due to the presentation or craftwork surrounding this line, overemphasizing the nomenclature and indicating an opening outwards, as with the Heideggerian emphasis available to Moore.

"Gun-metal" is common enough for Elizabeth Bishop to use it twice in the first two tercets of "Roosters" (North and South, 1946), affecting rhyme and standing singularly in the middle of each unit: "in the gun-metal blue dark" (2), "the gun-metal blue window" (4). It is an unlikely appropriation for Burnside as A Cold Spring (1955) could provide better coastal inspiration in its title poem as could "At The Fishhouses" or "Cape Breton". However, the underdeveloped early morning light and vantage to the world opens Bishop's poem about the cry of the natural world threading through the town and displacing individual perspective. This evokes Wordsworth in our reading. It is classified as "uncontrolled" and "traditional" (21) while also referring to claims to home and ways of living. Bishop

paints the town as a dynamic mosaic of sounds not all visible to the inhabitants at all times; to Burnside it represents giving over a familiar and fixed world to the fluid soundscape of the unfamiliar, the movement of mind. The spatial map provided by hearing informs cortical integration not the sensorial; it finds its ultimate expression in how "Old holy sculpture" (85) could capture the scene: home, work, and materials not used for scripture present themselves with assistance from the poet. It is only now that the poet can turn to physical labour with craft linked to the primitive and the wayward having been indirectly forwarded.

The salvage crew frame "Ports" in an effort to circularize and foreground constructed dwelling pitted against the vicissitudes of coastal life. Leading from "Wynd" signalling a narrow street, the labourers' workspace is seen in terms of restriction: "caged in a narrow scaffold" (1: 25), which is a well humoured negotiation of the claim that we harbour narrow minds and only a "handful" (13) of terms for our locatedness already widened by the expansion of Bishop's compound. Furthermore, the particular choice of "narrow" (25) recalls Wordsworth's reading of Robert Burns in respect of homeliness (Kerrigan 65), which opens to a sense of sharing a space with the dead in Burnside's allusion to graveyard poetry: "In ways the dead are placed / or how / they come to rest / I recognize myself" ("Fields" 1: 1-4).<sup>57</sup> Giving a single line to "or how" works to foreground the conception of the experience over the personal record to offer possibility and multiplicity; but Burnside's pun on "harbour" (3: 57) shifts noun to verb as a move from naming to happening. It is no worse than Wordsworth's use of "Stern" in Home (224-229). Both contemplate space to indicate a mental disposition and physical world fitted into a single (ambivalent and mutable)

---

<sup>57</sup> Also Burns "Elegy on Stella" and Wordsworth "Poems on the Naming of Places IV: 'A Narrow Girdle of Rough Stones and Crags'".

directional word. We are caught in a familiar battle of representation but with an increasing emphasis upon human material.

The gun colour enables a contrast; it is not carried through to the workers who are matched to "the ghosts / of umber and *blanc-de-Chine*" (26-27). The earthy and ligneous brown suggesting shadow and protection is linked to its opposite (the stark, monochrome, ceramic artefacts) and betokens that the fictional consideration of home is mere synthesis and manipulation but is also co-creative with the changing world we witness. Later, these figures are given a different order:

They're swaddled in orange or lime-green  
 overalls  
     their faces sheathed  
 in perspex: crouched to the blue  
 of their torches  
     they are innocent  
 of presence  
     flashes and sparks  
 dancing in the blackness of their masks  
 as if in emptiness. (3: 34-43)

Far from idealizing their labour, this reading arrives after contemplation of death (underlined by the echo in "swaddled" to "Halloween", MOT) and has specific notes of a critique beyond a countering of the sentimental. This post-pastoral emphasis comes from a particular insight into the poetic reflection of the labourer's task to protect things that are not enduring. Underlined by the emphasis on light, the contingent compound of action and time within the praxis of husbandmen is located within a void or "emptiness". In the scene where men are setting their owned objects in order, Burnside can only make from what is given to him in the spaces between the switching, flash-based light, and the dark of torches and night. The poem works in this unclarified vortex. The "flashes" are temporal insights, illuminated sparks of momentary raised consciousness rather than the prolonged sense of light as

enlightenment (cf. TLT). In this collection they relate to Heidegger's conception of "the turning" as "lightning-flash" where language negotiates oblivion and harnesses presence (Question 44). It is a modernized view of the Wordsworthian context and situation but it situates the contemporary poet as figure in the knowledge of this temporal and fictive integration (cf. their "innocence"). This aspect informs a phenomenological reading, indebted to the sense I take from Kroeber's Wordsworth, where the light provided by the labour is not derived specifically from either blowtorches or soldering irons in Burnside (one the agent of destruction, the other, healing) -- the *why* of the world -- but affords the scene its reading -- the *how* of the world -- the gathering of opposites, much like research (intinerancy/discovery) and security (calm) fuse to offer home. It is craft that suggests revealing over manufacturing, the Heideggerian poetic bringing forth of world: Being entering into "its own emitting of light" (45) -- the forwarding of craftwork, the origin of art (Heidegger).

Adjectives from the natural world are collocated with commercial technology to propose that the men are "swaddled" ("Ports" 3: 34) in the world, saturated in this environment of two forces. It chimes with Moore in this sense as an evocation of protective binding that restricts action, but also to the close of solipsism in "Halloween" and its use of the word. However, motion overwrites enveloped pictorial elements or what "presence" references. The energized dance reflecting on the labourers' masks suggests the life that is latent in all "emptiness". These two terms literally bracket dark and light in this sequence and communicate how "the harbour belongs / to men at work" (32-33). Burnside's figuration does not forward an ignorance of interplay and submerged energy but promotes a sense of innocence (or neutrality) and potential: this freedom from restricted artifice and from mindlessness as emptiness enables the workers'

isolation and keen rooting to the harbour. The poet desires this in his craft. We read that they cooperate with their tools and become "immune to everything / that moves or falls around them / isolates / suspended in the constancy / of fire" (49-53). The mode of belonging could be critiqued for detachment and selfish pursuit but the scene's overriding sense of suspension within a non-contingent fabric suggests both relinquishment from territorialization and an involvement with material locality. The notion of constancy in the primal elements motions beyond the fabrications and techne of torchlight working against the given. Furthermore, it points us forward -- yet incontestably different in ontology -- to the geese of the following poem, reassuringly instinctual: "homing" ("Geese" 21) via the body and not mind. This is contentious, but I believe these framing figures instance progress in the poet's attunement to the scene, which comes from the contemplation of his neighbour and the graveyard, bringing Kerrigan's context into play and Garrard's vertical anthropology (below), too.

The second section, titled "Urlicht" promotes non-foundational thought caught in "a catalogue of wrecks / and slants of light" (2: 3-4). While living is seen as establishing relations within a reality that has been fragmented via Dickinson's lexis, the prerogative is to forward the relationship to self as an internal relationship falls away. It is much like the wrestling against decay of the "forced" (11) vision of the farmstead dweller is rejected for the "plumbing" (40) into time of the coastal inhabitant. Burnside begins to incorporate stories of fellow dwellers in Anstruther. The diver works through wreckage and "has burrowed in the mud / to touch the mystery of something absolute" (42-43). This absolute is the notion of death translated from the cargo holds of German sailboats, Falkland carcasses in the heritage reserve's Victorian designed estate in Fife, and Welsh coal-boats. These are particular

historical references to human manipulations of land and sea in terms of cultivation, trade, and war, all seen through the lens of decay. We should contemplate two significant factors.

First, the word "neighbour" preserves the trace of building as dwelling (Heidegger "Building Dwelling Thinking", Basic 348-9) -- the common good that suggests the law of commandment falls to the new life of the spirit in the law of members, as in St. Paul (Romans 7).<sup>58</sup> It is significant that the neighbour's forename matches that of the poet. The extent to which this is a regress of identity -- which, to Garrard is the challenge laid bare in accessing things, the "rupture of identity [the] very principle of dwelling" ("Heidegger" 174) -- or a reading of the self-same in the other, bears out in Burnside's underlining of the need to read the scene on its terms not via human will, solely. Secondly, the sense of light and what it enables us to capture in the labourer's scene, is translated into the diver's camera betraying "the picture he wanted" (2: 87), which is the "animal silence" (91) that resists being locked into a static container. This bleeds into the third section "Moorings" via enjambment across the words, "that" and "kinship" (2: 45 - 3: 1).

The semantic expanse over the white space troubles grammatical readings and the spatially displaced enjambment undermines the first word as conjunctive or relative pronoun. Moreover, while different to an article this word floats toward a preposition in the indicative mood but its spatial form indicates a confused conjunction-preposition before one clause and following another. As an expression of the world's existence, it ties an alien indicative deictic to temporal blood-deep comradeship while simultaneously commuting energy outside a standing reserve. This is unique to

---

<sup>58</sup> Also Alain Badiou, Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism (Stanford, Calif.: California UP, 2003), and Slavoy Zizek, Eric L. Santer and Kenneth Reinhard, The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology (Chicago, Ill.: U of Chicago P, 2005).

Burnside:

When we go walking  
 early  
     at the furled edge of the sea  
 we find dark webs of crabmeat  
                                   herring-bone  
   wet  
 diaphragms of stranded jelly-fish  
 spring water mingles with salt beneath the church  
 where Anstruther's dead are harboured in silent loam  
 sea-litter washes the wall where the graveyard ends  
 a scatter of shells and hairweed  
   and pebbles of glass  
 made smooth  
     in the sway of the tide. (2-15)

"Beneath" offers perceptual prominence enabling context not relativism and adding perspective we would not ordinarily have. "Walking" and "early" promote the innocent nomad as "furled" through lingering consonants suggestive of the roaming impulse leading to future development, much like the Williamsesque placement of "wet", dangling and enfolding three meanings operating across the past sense of "furled" which limits development (from one perspective) and offers that which is always already developed and has a future (from another). Furthermore, the rhyme between "sea" and "meat" gives singularity to the "herring-bone" and "wet" as stranded words littered on the edge of the verse. Yet the stress on spring and water writes of one force opening up to the world rather than being stagnant. It is accepting of life stripped of vanities ("meat", "bone"), spilling not unlike the expansive verse that collocates "herring-bone" and "pebbles of glass" in the same vertical semantic thread. This latter register suggests the labour of the ocean transforming -- or releasing -- the manufactured and synthetic into an identity with a non-alienated place.

Furthermore, qualifiers include "furled", "mingles", and "scatter"

within the flotsam beneath the graveyard of St Nicholas (Anstruther Wester). This church terminates the harbour and looks easterly onto the town of Anstruther and the half-mile of coastline separating it from Cellardyke harbour, Burnside's home. Individually these qualifiers suggest a neat gathering or compass, as a fisherman would make his sail to a horizon of a central perspective, but they also signify the undulations and rhythms of life at the edges. Burnside's peripheral vision and concern for unnamed borderlines that links the wild and domestic releases things physically united to combine or confuse previous order, thus leading toward wide and irregular distribution. In contrast to the flotsam that the diver is intrigued by, these items of sea-litter or dead forms are inconspicuous; they are also patterned and associated with "spring water" (3: 9) and bring forth an undulating rhythm, "in the sway", "of the tide" (15). This integrated music develops into a free verse deconstruction of Wordsworthian holy terminus into the 'habitual sway' of co-creation, as I shall indicate.

Kerridge has argued that litter is an overspill from nature's instrumental system ("Small" 192); the ecological abject in Burnside is filtered through verbs: we reread "scatter" to connote the radiation of life, or its affordance, seed that dispels any sad and singular terminus yet also reduces each to its limit. The sea-litter knocks against the walls of the dead who "are harboured in silent loam" and the awakening that the overspill attempts is of peace inflected within the promotion of the earth as clay, the call for all our creations to be co-creational with the larger cycles, the "loam" that is the substance of the human body. We find that it is not easily at rest in a simple enclosed system. The word is doubled in the half-rhymes with "bone" and "stones" while also spatially and sonically locating "belong" to work the sense of the earth as material into the site of a record or monument. Any suggestion of



purposiveness here is deconstructed in the various senses that Burnside incorporates into his sense of settlement throughout the volume, which moves away from the monumental and leads into the dynamic. This transforms an indication of fertile soil as a place of dispossession and incorporation. The nexus over the static reserve is presented once more. It is how we should read Burnside's versions of history, despite the fact that it requires a particular phenomenological tuning that short-circuits the pleasure of the poetry operating outside this modality. It is a loss, but perhaps a necessity driven by ethics and thematic.

### III.B. Settlements

The Burnside reader approaches "Settlements" not only with the defamiliarized notions of journeying unravelled in "Ports" but with a history of poetry in his oeuvre outplaying false epistemologies that govern the way we think and settle into our lives. This foundation is twisted by an apocryphal quotation from Luther: "God answers our prayers by refusing them" (TAD 23). The poem at first appears to be configured for us to think not of man's actions but of how they are received: to decentre man and foreground autonomy or the necessary non-existence of God. Prayer is grounded in the assurance that it obtains its desire, but Luther is stating that God does not yield to man's petitions. Lutheran fellowship requires prayer in order that we know that we stand before God, a necessity to prove that we are on the road of the Gospel and the Law. It is submission in the sense that it is graced participation in relation not petition; a deep act of theistic belief that God is for man but that the initiative to prayer is not regulated by man but by the reshaping of desire for what is truly desirable. Thus, Burnside is more concerned with humility than with faith strengthened by an absence of grace (or the

presumption of divine intervention seemingly unfulfilled). The epigraph could be read alongside the thesis of decreation (cf. ch. 5), but within this section of the prolegomenon I move to the theme of the 'withheld' rather than Burnside's poetic practice.

The epigraph restates Hölderlin's position that there is no measure for earth ("In Lovely Blueness..."). In "Roads" Burnside speaks of "the pull of the withheld" (4: 70), which plays into the collection's central sense of insufficiency, the irretrievable and incompleteness in the world of expectation, not the German transcendence of division. The protagonist's unrequited (and possessive) love in the title poem signifies this most explicitly to commute how possession and power are central concerns for the poet's masculinist ecopoetic. This asylum register revisits an ethics of relinquishment within the demands of "Settlements" and rather than promoting an idea of touching the silence of God, Burnside works through a sense of strangeness toward a post-theological sense of being unprepared and being granted. While grace may fill an empty space, entry to the void is only possible once this has been made; grace makes the void, it prepares itself, Hölderlin convinces us, by making us homesick, separating us from origin or source. Again Burnside's poetic vortex comes to light.

The first section, "A Place By The Sea", forwards fear and failed navigation in lieu of a wide darkness that is rich and strange; the fourth section "What We Know Of Houses" enfolds "A Process of Separation" and "Epithalamuim" (ANS) into this collection. The poems of union through difference link by reworking their lines into the title of the subsection "Settlements". This poem links directly to "The Men's Harbour", too, beginning with the word "Sunday" but speaking explicitly of the pre-Christian Picts. The descendants of the aboriginal Caledonian small farm communities populated by folk of nomadic transhumance and fixed transhumance does not instance that

Burnside is interested in national life-ways. It uncovers spiritual inheritance to entwine the notion of holy ground and our quest for meaning within our contemplation of home. Critical inquiry is impelled to move towards Wordsworthian secular humanism.

I like to think of them  
 on days like this  
 perched on a shelf of rock beneath the trees  
 watching their children  
   thinking of their stock  
 then stepping out  
                                   to sacrifice  
   or blessing  
 as we have stood together in the shade  
 made awkward by the quiet of the place  
 a darkness that continues while the sun  
 brightens the fields  
                                   and gardens fill with light  
 in market towns or tidy golf-hotels  
 above the sea. (10-24)

Spilling through these lines are the jarring 'k' sounds of "stock", "awkward", and "market" echoing the clan's name and offering the detached view of the animal neighbours as commodity. These are masked by the endnote of "sacrifice" meeting "sun" through the stressed 'l' sounds in "blessing", "fields", and "fill" -- a heightened sense of play outshining the harvest but only into a terminus point of the double sounding "golf-hotels" to signify the contemporary reduction to objectness of Scotland's green spaces. However, the "unverified" "holy ground" that Burnside alludes to is underneath this top layer of commercial land ownership, a world where "thinking" is jammed between "sacrifice" and "blessing" as an interesting triangulation suggested in the shape of the verse on the page. We have the non-contingent as source of positivism when certain techniques of living are given up, or decentred.

This bitterness gives way to a larger allusion. MacDiarmid's "On a Raised Beach" (Stony Limits, 1934) is deftly brought alive in the shelf of rock and quietness, yet this silence to Burnside makes us



us in our *allotment* that is *admitted*. The Lutheran matrix given inflection by the land ethic is Burnside's lasting religiosity or ecological sense of the given and the integrated. The next key poem secularizes this philosophical abstraction further, which would represent a larger problem for readers if the poetry did not anchor this to the humanly willed modification of the environment. History qualifies mental solipsism but signifies Burnside's poetic limit.

### III.C. Fields

"Fields" promotes a sense of health and security within a contemplation of cultivation and agriculture as backdrop to personal history and identity. Alongside "Roads", this works through Burnside's final poetic representation of his father, a psychosis that fades as a presence in TLT and TGN; however, turning on the figure that links outward to a historical sense of fields, this poem anchors the sense of fields as limited domains. As such it recalls Wordsworth's Home but what kind of ecological voice operates here? In terms of inheritance, it recalls Moore's epigraph but it is associated with legacy and zones constructed to control crops, animal habitats, and disease flows. The figure is an agent in the slaughtering of cattle, an action together with the destruction of infected areas and quarantine measures, border controls, and surveillance, reflects back upon the human dwelling and the limits of our freedom within contemporary science. Poetic inflection, however, promotes an understanding of a (lost) directive principle.

Once  
in rural Fife  
and Angus  
farmers held  
one acre of their land  
untilled  
unscarred  
to house this mute

concurrency with the dead  
choosing from all their fields  
one empty plot  
that smelled or tasted right

one house of dreams. (26-37)

One reading notices people and place scattered, "untilled" and "unscarred" in contrast to the writerly "concurrence" that "house[s]" our dwelling and we recall the Wordsworthian imaginative synthesis over Stevens. Moreover, the two spatial forms evidence a technologized push towards the literal in the last six lines. The half-rhymes press thought into shape but create space for the words to resonate subtly in their own space as with "held" and "land" inside "untilled" purporting an empty or loose control of words, while simultaneously registering a form of husbandship in the word containing others ("held"). The voice's claim to kinship with the dead comes from being unfulfilled, underlined in the commitment to the land shown in the withdrawal from cultivating an enclosed space known as "Gude Man's Land" or "Devil's Piece". This is given full artistic imagination in "The Hay Devil" traced in the Gaelic neimheadh, originally given to a Druidical grove.<sup>59</sup> Again, readers are carried into an eco-phenomenological poetic that is fragile and dependant upon the willingness to engage with the silent, historical hinterland.

A century after reformation, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland would fine farmers for not working the gudeman croft. It was an effort that coincided with the banning of bonfires at Beltane, Midsummer, Halloween, and Yule through concerns that the memory of pagan boundaries of sacred sites would gain advantage over (and outlive) the work ethic; a practice that began to be forgotten only as late as the early nineteenth century (McNeill 21-22, 59). Using this sacred practice to highlight our modern contamination condition

<sup>59</sup> For example, Navitie, Fife between Loch Leven and Cowdenbeath.

("Fields" 15-16, 73-76) and to colour the poem's consideration of modifications made to the protagonist's garden as a form of colonization, Burnside sustains the technique of creating as something brokered by discovery and reformulation -- creative ecological principles. The two gardens formulated as palimpsest, blueprints implicit in each other, lead the poem into a consideration of our mental faculties in the third section to highlight the material manifestation of myth that is the field.

Who blurred the sheep with scab? Who curdled milk?  
 Who was it fledged the wombs of speechless girls?  
 They knew, and made their standard offerings  
 and called it peace. (3: 20-23)

That knowledge is a compression of the threaded, inter-relational energy across the lives of the poem's characters and places (Agnes, Angus; Agnes, father) is a position mannered in a way that Wordsworthian community in Burnside can be seen as indicative of an invisible fabric of interlocking systems of inter-assimilation. These return once more to his father, only this time the poet is an adult and is terminating the other's material presence. Preparation for this has come to us through poetics charged not by the necessity of naked navigation but the possible insight from blindness as in the sixteen lines that follow those above, developing the delicate moments of knowledge in microscopic transactions that trusts the eternal threads -- as indicated in the uraninite (pitchblende) reverberations. Here, Burnside loses the reader via an indeterminate pronoun operating across former self, father, and God; a dialogue moving into trilogy and then out into a dance from an emotional boundary ("what I would not dare" (28)), where the unsaid speaks deeper. But the poem requires correlation to a boundary, or limitation, to be housed itself in the right ethical site; thus after a final recollection of his father and the notion of dismissed

authority, heightened perception and new freedom issues from the poem reconnected to earth. Here, the autobiographical persona reconnects to the reader as a storyteller:

I buried those clothes in a field above the town  
 finding a disused lair amongst the stones  
 that tasted of water  
   then moss  
   then something  
 sharper  
           like a struck match in the grass  
 or how he once had smelled  
   home from the pit  
 his body doused in gas  
   and anthracite. (4: 35-45)

Total unity is not desired in the broken iambic pentameter of the last couplet fragmented into two, while reverse stress and rhythm coming in the final four syllables promotes another voice or perspective than the opening persona. Schizophrenia, individuality, wholeness, and multiplicity are resident in those lines. Readers are left to read either a misconstrued or a badly configured voice, or a mode that betokens possibility (as witnessed in the wider self of MOT) and scrutinizes potential in an attempt to teach the individual new ways of understanding self and world through integration with the collective.

A ghostly image of the war memorial and allotments on the hill above the edge of Cowdenbeath High Street turning into Perth Road echoes with "Ports" taking Bishop's "anthracite" (45) from "Roosters" (and echoes with Burnside's early version of Dickinson). Riddled with threads and traces, the poem forwards integration as transfiguration. Not unlike the priest and the neighbour of the first section, the father is "transfigured by the work" (19) that he undertakes, and so, too, is the protagonist. A Christian reference to more than simple outward appearance being altered, more a metamorphosis or spiritualizing i.e. body into white light (Matt.





memory and presence, fear and confirmation, relinquishment and a return home. It has been a long journey and it requires a little historical reflection.

The opencast ironstone mines and steel mills nationalised in 1967 were the workplace for Burnside's father and the reason for the family's move south of the border to Northamptonshire in 1965, shortly before the closures and rise of unemployment to over 30 percent of the district's population. The steel town was designated a new town in 1950 by the Corby Development Corporation's expansion. It is vastly different now that the mines are closed and land has returned to agriculture. It is yet another homestead that is a fading memory in Britain's cultural psyche. "Fields" is the reconnection of the personal, the consequences of our everyday life and our worldly circumstance, and an indication to the health issues of an environmental crisis: the fabric that connects us all (whether metaphysical or not) at the whim of (economic) power games wherein huge moments press upon the individual in extreme ways:

the blind calves laid in the earth  
a nightmare for weeks  
of gunshots  
and buried flesh

yet still (1: 121-125)

The insomnia of the first section "Landfill" is an anxious disturbed state of mind that has to run the contrast between the medieval respect for land and the current use of pits and then on into the context of crisis. These are problematized by semantic gaps and blurs, and by the poetic vision shifting from rite to right.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> The foot and mouth epidemic of 1967, which Burnside may be recalling through his father's subsequent employment in the agricultural sector (although his dates suggest an earlier outbreak) was replayed in 2001, a year after the publication of TAD. At the time of writing, the European Union was terminating the export ban on

One could read Garrard's assertion of an intimate ecology, the geophilosophy of the local (not the international) where dwelling is attunement to Being via protection and cultivation. Burnside's betweeness, much like Heaney's operates within a "mnemotechnical function", the vertical excavation of the land resource enabling psychological and mythological aspects of cultural memory to come forth (Garrard "Heidegger" 170). It is undoubtedly the political hinterland to the poetic consideration of how personal experience, the remnants of time that lay around us, and our inescapable interactions -- the footprint of human involvement -- constantly form our true navigation of place (much as Wordsworth's Home). It is a post-Romantic stillness, as in the last line, that views resources infused with personal and communal history, promoting the calibration of action to effects over time. Both connect the macro to the micro, as with the panoramic sense following the image of the still church where the objective and detached view of the mourning family in isolation runs into the incredibly dynamic personal fragments of the deceased and then into the universal sense of world as "timesoiled" (105-17), a highly interesting expansive dynamic. Whether this particular history is an intentional choice or all that is available to the poet is something that we can contest elsewhere; it has clearly shifted contemplation from poetry to history, technique to theme.

---

British livestock, meat, and dairy products following another outbreak in August 2007. The disease runs along animate and inanimate vectors that suggest precarious barriers in the natural world are at risk to mutating viruses that are parasites upon biotic displacements and flows: wind, movement of animals, contact between livestock, shared pasturage, networks of trade, and human contact are contributory factors to the spread of the disease. See "Animal Health And Welfare: Foot and Mouth," Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://www.defra.gov.uk/footandmouth/>>. For the 2001 epidemic in Britain, see John Law's "Disaster in Agriculture: Or Foot and Mouth Mobilities," The Centre for Science Studies, Lancaster University (2004) 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/sociology/papers/law-disaster-mobilities-foot-and-mouth.pdf>>.

### III.D. Roads

The final poem makes a circular reference back to the opening poem "Ports" and Burnside's use of the esoteric French poet and painter, Henri Michaux's reflections upon travelling and the mystery of the duality of the harbour as terminus *and* departure point. This time an epigraph from Octavio Paz provides escape and an emphasis on relations (which Burnside carries through into TLT). The Labyrinth of Solitude (1950) Paz's essay upon history, collective culture, and individual identity gives over to the notion of death and how it reflects the vanity of the living, how it defines life and shows its mutable forms. In "Poetry and History" (1956), Paz reconsiders notions of repetition within a thesis on the occult revelation of otherness. The recreation or ritual of the poem articulates and provides access to the "consecration of a concrete historical experience" (Bow 211), the kingdom of the fixed present where perpetual comradeship is re-established. Paz's thinking does not rewrite the law of entropy -- the passing of energy into different states -- in terms of (cultural) translation or (spiritual) transformation, but reads Hölderlin and Rilke to express the investment in humanized order that veils chaos -- something that needs to be rejected by the creature that is open to world. This enables singularity to be "attenuated": a form of redemption where time has meaning and purpose, the emphasis of the "now" (204). I revisit this emphasizing Burnside's desire to move.

Burnside negotiates Paz's notion of Mexican nihilism and solitude by focussing on change as disappearance, drawing from the poem "En tránsito [In Transit]": "Transcurrir es suficiente, / Transcurrir es quedarse" ("To pass is sufficient, / To pass is to remain") as epigraph. The context of brotherhood with the non-human world brings sustenance and reduction simultaneously to the human, which clarifies

Burnside's sense of annunciation in this poem while also suggesting the trace that we leave in places after departure. As with all the images of infection and contamination in the first and fourth section of "Fields", the metaphor works to resonate with the themes of history and tradition, and continuum and identity that begin to override the spiritual frame that the earlier Burnside secured to the human. The poet must turn to the natural world for empirical not metaphorical evidence: the sense of prolonging and terminus as the presence of "oil slicks and fruit spills" (1: 13) and the presence:

on back roads scabbed with weeds or veiled with sand  
 running through chicken farms and unmapped towns  
 or rising to the chill  
 of native pine. (44-47)

Poetic compression brings human land marked by nature's resistance in proximity to worlds beyond the cartographic radar. These contraries give a sense of vertigo and paralysis to the comparative "rising", yet when "native" scans as indigenous -- inherent, innate, natural -- an intuitive feeling evidently suggests that the wood gives to the human securely. The word is deployed economically to signal a lack of distinction between subject and object. This direction (nature to human) is given further complex treatment in the assonance of the "s" sound notably absent in the last line, which would turn pine to "spine", the mythical station of the soul in turn transforming world or fitting world into the indisputably human realm. I argue that this sense cannot be reduced to simple models of appropriation.

The tree reminds us of the pine that is the most widely distributed conifer in the world and the distinctly native keystone species to the boreal component of the Caledonian Forest. Moreover, the poetic heritage resonates with Stevens' desire for truth over anatomical thinking. A purity derived from the postponement of "the physical pine, the metaphysical pine" ("Credences of Summer" 2: 1-2)

is the combined universal and particular in Stevens and Burnside that recalls Wordsworth's "pine". This is poetic urge to long no more (Home 846) once the revealed universal condition can be brought to light, we read how the ecology of individual, place, and history offer intersubjective mapping of place. However, Burnside's "sudden / untenable light" (1: 15) suggests an incapability of this being maintained; to be written into the present and materialized as "untenable" is a paradoxical signifier, both indefensible and not affording occupation. This may represent distaste for the provincial or regional, but crucially this personal understanding of homelessness brings the poet to desire limbo as a state without the need to reduce world to names and events or extending cartography through historic sensibility: it is temporality as bedrock.

Ultimately another phase of relinquishing finds selfhood within a "*living caesura, less than the sum of my parts*" (2 15). The absence of a gestalt or even complete totality presents a vacuum that is not empty but energized, yet not finalized. Moreover, in addition to latency and potential it draws from Paz's artistic sensibility that inspired Elizabeth Bishop's translations that attend to his articulation of between-ness.<sup>61</sup> A sense of self that is different from the branded world is put forward in Paz; Burnside uses this to work against the sense that the world is designed for our taste and consumption. It is an emphasis on the empirical in a raw state before envelopment. It can be read as a platform for production rather than consumption. The reader that is sensitive to Burnside's Hallowtide liminal self and to the poetics of ecological consciousness is one alert to the significances here.

Furthermore, this stance opens Burnside's version of potential

---

<sup>61</sup> Most especially in tune to Paz poetizing love and the infinity of stillness from which fabrications arise: "All is gain / if all is lost... We never arrive / Never reach where we are" ("Return" 165-166 from "*Ciudad de Mexico*", Vuelta, 1969-1975).

energy as an attunement to a sense of arrival without the knowledge of a journey or willed desire. It is without pursuit and reminiscent of nature as "not yet";<sup>62</sup> moreover, it revisits his use of silence and transforms it into an aperture of possibility:

those upland silences that last for days  
 delectable mountains                      hillsides clad with pines  
 and cherries                                      the grey of nearness  
    soldiers  
 standing in a clearing by a truck  
 boys from the country in jackboots  
 and threadbare shirts (37-45)

The rough sounds of "jackboots" connotes ugly, military oppression and has been prepared by the palette's use of "cl" sounds in "clad" and "clearing" noticeably widened and reversed in "delectable" with the semantic stress on taste and consumption heightened. The latter is central to a sense of opening up new possibilities by allowing the resonance of that which comes forth, it is the animation of the mountains as striving towards consciousness contrasted to the appropriation of labour for territorial means, extending the poetics of "Fields". This takes on a local texture in this poem, yet to be "clad" is to be covered, what thus comes forth after the clearing that is particular to this site? That which has come before: the nearness and resonance of "delectable" operating within the Puritan strain.

Burnside's allusion to John Bunyan may be missed if he were not to repeat the particular landscape in the same manner, later in section three, "Pilgrimage" viewing the "delectable mountains" (33) again. Burnside is speaking of illusory journeys without being pejorative; as Bunyan's frontispiece to Pilgrim's Progress (1684) stipulates, the text is the similitude of a dream as transport between this world and

---

<sup>62</sup> Adorno (Aesthetic 107); ch. 1, p. 59.

one forthcoming. We circle back to earlier thoughts of terminus and back to the thesis' epigraph and the black-green dynamic: "Dark Clouds bring Waters, when the bright bring none" (Bunyan 2). Burnside's appropriation of Bunyan has Eucharist consonance: it is of the host making an offering that is not taken but received; something that enters into one to satisfy a non-appropriative hunger. The illusory journey, therefore, is one that is neither taken in desire nor fear but in respect of the other, weighted by the need to converse and share; it is how one takes communion.

Section four, "Ida Y Vuelta" ("Going and Coming") reconsiders that to dwell is to inhabit and that habitation incorporates time and history, for they involve place, fundamentally.<sup>63</sup> These co-ordinates are of little use to the figure alone in the dark sanctuary of nothingness, attempting to communicate this to his partner and for her to witness the immensity of nature, and how it is irreducible and confusing. Instancing domestic conversation shifts the poetry into the autobiographic and displaces the Heideggerian template.

Yo atravesé los arcos y los puentes  
 Yo estaba vivo, en busca de la vida  
 (I crossed the arcs and the bridges  
 I was alive, in search of the life) (34-35)

To the phenomenologist the emphasis on the energy track of thought shaped by inquiry is central here; to the reader attuned to Burnside's death-life-continuum inquiry via ethics, the eye propels itself to the phrase "moving without desire" (39) -- this entails bodily reduction to the material and the will to communicate in concert with the world outside anthropocentrism:

Yo estaba vivo y vi muchos fantasmas,  
 Todos de carne y hueso y todos ávidos

---

<sup>63</sup> First published in Letras Libres 25 (2001).



(I was alive and saw many ghosts,  
 All of meat and bone and all eager ones) (41-42)  
 or how a life  
 can never quite be seen  
 in this measure of rain  
 a bruise of kisses  
 seeping to the bone  
 and waiting there  
 to flower as a word (43-49)

The contradiction of phenomenological poetics stressed by "or" and by how it can "never" "quite" represent is particularly poignant. The last line recalls Rilke's ninth Duino elegy where the traveller brings a pure word, not flower, from the mountain: an instance of the archetypal phenomenon, concrete and empirical, and a world of the past brought into the present (Arendt 164, 206). Yet this is given Burnside's unique treatment and sensitivity to how the transcended or phenomenological world suspended in its own linguistic and mental realm dissolves into a crumbling enchantment beyond representation or communication protocols when brought to bear to another, or when momentary quickness is dispelled and the site of loss is pregnant only with recollection and impetus to replay the moment when it could see a new beginning (as continuation). Burnside's poetic is under the lens. This vacancy elevates its fragility, contingency, and value. Looking closer at the poem, "Bruise" is bodily and textual: to process the physical world into language is a version of Morley's thematic concern within Heideggerian poesis that Kerrigan outlines as disclosure "[of] the nature of things through flashes within a consciousness uncentred into language" (56). I am reading this as a development of Burnside's pre-dwelling epiphanic linguistic firework that leaves a trace of something magical as a resource for thinking. Now seen in terms of flora it is turned into a gesture not dissimilar to Wordsworth's closure to the fifth book of The Prelude presenting a gap in logic that rings untrue yet dispenses a new singularity, uncentred yet communicated. To bloom, attract, and expand "in a

word" would not suggest an adornment or veil through naming but it is the nominative (i.e. the foundational, original act in human relation to world) developed into an image of growth, that like blossom, is independent of the plant. That is to say, to trigger spontaneously and attain the grammatical, intransitive verbal sense of "flower" (a limited relation that does not take an object, as naming might) to attain height and thrive (again afforded by the shift from noun to verb). We remember Moore as epigraph and the abaxial within home.

To emphasize the effect Burnside presents an array of singular objects united in their collocation within a field of potential relations; it echoes the "inclusive vitality of being multiform" (Kroeber Ecological 56) within poetics of interanimation:

Tigre, novilla, pulpo, yedra en llamas  
(Tiger, heifer, squid, ivy in flames) (4: 50)

whichever one you choose  
it's all the same:  
arrival; end; hibiscus; carbon; stone. (51-53)

To the craftsperson the predator, the domestic, the sea, and the earth are equated and given equal space to the poet as receiver-transmitter. While the first list ends with an allusion to Bergson's blue flame of élan and Heraclitus' fire, the latter array allows terminal and origin to open into a loose elemental threefold, which reflects Burnside's textual point. Respectively: the tropical Rose-mallow signifies herb, shrub, or tree; the non-metallic organic compound incredibly abundant in nature (used for our electric lights) locates the cycle of plant and animal life, respiration and atmosphere (equally significant if charged by footprint, sink and tax, to an ecological listener); and "stone" relating to time, the inanimate and hard mineral signifying motionless, temporal perspectives. The latter two elements are loose allusions to basic oxygen steelmaking and slagheap moulds, while the first refers to the

hardy plant that is renowned for self-reliance, a form of syncretic earth song. This is not an organized array that blocks the shining-forth of the world nor is it a disorganized array that has no meaning; it is but a subtlety highlighting self-contained connotation below the surface to the interdependence and separation of human and nature within one ecological semantic string.

Wordsworth proposes that the poem presents objects in-themselves through language "a glory scarce their own" (The Prelude 5: 629) where the mind-power can be eased and volition diluted. The dependency of world upon raised self-consciousness in Burnside does not relate to (instrumental) causality wherein one is indebted to an other. The poetic entrance into the unconcealed and the process of bringing that forth to others (an *attendance* or ministration (5: 620)) is a model of co-responsibility for the being and effecting of its other (Heidegger Question 10-11, 19). I suggest this is not paradigmatically incoherent to Idealist thought, in respect to co-creation. As ethical as this agency may be, Burnside would reconfigure passivity towards harnessing life and dynamism from alien forms. Inaction may not be appropriate in this new century of crisis, while power and force is unmistakably outlawed by his ethical code.

#### IV. A Conclusion on Labour and "The Men's Harbour"

I have shown how Burnside's ethics of relinquishment interface with labour in TAD. Poirier reads manual labour in Frost in Emersonian terms of the penetration of matter outwards: "such penetration is the precondition for the discovery of an intermediate realm where something in the self and something in 'things' can meet in a 'system of approximations'" (Knowing 279). In contrasting the husbandman to the killer, Lawrence writes that the former "brings about the birth

and increase"; he continues:

But even the husbandman strains in the dark mastery over the unwilling earth and beast; he struggles to win forth substance, he must master the oil and the strong cattle, he must have the heavy blood-knowledge, and the low, but deep, mastery. There is no equality or selfless humility (37).

Kroeber cannot think of Wordsworth's homecoming in an analogy different from the wolf, a predator of "territorial familiarity" ("Home" 134). Burnside, having contemplated the killer and "blood knowledge" together with Wordsworth's "savage instinct" (Home 914) that charges his struggle (914-955), attempts to balance the ecological notion of approximation while also developing a non-egotistical, humble self that is born of approximations but can wander freely. His ecological voice, negotiating a plethora of forebears and impulses, suggests a stance in relation but not one easily given to relinquish solitude or self-reliance. Again, it is the most alluring thematic.

In "Blues" a variation of nostalgia and melancholy gives way to versions of departure and movement within notions of denial, the undiscovered and the half-light of knowing: "the not-pursued" resting "on the cusp / of touch / of loss" (3: 18-21). In "Geese", ego-free labour and attunement to nature are given in one move. The migratory birds -- reminiscent of Leopold's symbol of unity par excellence (A Sand Country Almanac) -- devolve "the homing instinct" (Burnside 21) via playful labour whose tenure is impossible to grasp by the human, yet is fathomable as "purer agency" (77). In "Blues" Burnside calls this state "abandoned" (2: 2) and the particular exilic solitude or alien consciousness paradoxically fits mind and world via instinct. Moreover, the depiction of labourers in "Fisherfolk at New Haven" and in "Ports", as untraceable, melding forms of the light that defines them is considered in "The Men's Harbour" as "unaccountable" (12) to

both subject and object: it is a version of relationship between physics and technology that Burnside calls the "moment of self-forgetting" (62). It relates to Heidegger's ethical term "ver-an-lassen" (Question 9): liberty that occasions or sets things on their way, consonant with the Taoist letting be, and the ecological affordance of thing to its arrival. Here, the phenomenological aspect of the poetry is under intense pressure and can be seen to be forcefully -- or deliberately and self-consciously -- embedded within historical context by Burnside's transparent frames.

The crafted language that is working within an elaborately conceived system of referencing (i.e. the intertext and the form of the dwelling triptych) is at once torn to suggest both skilled craft and labour, and to embrace intuitive energy, not to store or unlock energy via appropriation. Here technique breaks-down and gives way to theme. Thus self-reflection takes over as responsible agency, an occasion Burnside notes as "a knowledge they can't quite voice though it has to do / with the grace that distinguishes strength / from power" ("The Men's Harbour" 15-17). The variation and redeployment of intertext (especially Moore), the decoding of theological lexis, and the resultant expression and image of labour that is not a model of technological domination but harnessing beyond simple harmony, all work towards this imperative. For Heidegger, the significant definition of "harbour" is to "set [things] free...into [their] complete arrival" (Question 32): to abandon in the sense of enabling one's freedom by bringing it forward while respecting its own life-force. It is volition within Moore's "Paper Nautilus" which can be dangerous and must find the right balance that Burnside notices, not to be misinterpreted by others, self, or world, but knowing its own level of involvement.

The fourth stanza that views the scene from a distanced point-of-view has drawn the environment so that the men are set in place

fully. As readers, we need to exercise another step in this level of abstraction to gain the full weight of the moment. The camera zooms outward and widens its lens to pans across the Anstruther coastline westward to the caravan park where it finds a blackbird (30-37). This is a move into abstraction that finds the particular. Moreover, while this reworks lines directly from Moore's poem ("the white on white" 31) it also reintroduces the symbolic bird of mourning to rethread the notion of death or the loss of self and to lead onto a further appropriation of Stevens in TLT. In this incredibly dense movement of poetry, Burnside contextualizes the men in their environment, draws from Heidegger, while also collocating American poetics to Scottish history to effect another sense of migration within his elaborating and extensive poetics. Moreover, this is not a dislocated reference from post-modernist avant-garde melancholia, for it enfolds Kazimir Malevitch's series "White on White" (1917-1918), where the absence of colour affords the subtle emergence of outlines from backgrounds: this is the keynote to Burnside's poetics of the unnameable arising through itself fabricated by an ecological emptiness (or poetic vortex).

Finally, the phantom boat that arrives in the final stanza (67-70) to indicate the epiphanical connection to ecological worldliness has "snow on the deck" (68) and resonates with MacLean's poem, "Nighean is Seann Orain". MacLean's poignancy derives from unattainable dwelling written in the negative: "who sees a ship in the sea of Canna, / a ship that does not strive with white furrows, / that does not seek the harbour / that no one will never reach" (cited Herdman 166). Rather than follow MacLean into the dream of unattainable synthesis or the search for the absolute that cannot be reached, Burnside's poem is charged by an internal array to promote individual ethics outside the negative. First, this resonates on a textual

level to the silent harmonics of "a struck bell... singing in [the] blood" ("Sense Data", 24-25), then the first light delivered by silence in "the ceasing of a bell" ("Ports" 2: 22) and lastly to the snow-like absence of a dissolving town into silence "where the blackbird vanishes" ("Fields" 2: 31). This last reference depicts the sense of abandonment and surrender within a domestic scene pregnant with the past and with connections to other parts of the town. It is the richest microcosm of Burnside's ecological poesis folding world, word, human, animal, presence and absence, silence, and snow into what he shows in "Adam and Eve" as the surrender to the "white-out" (64) the slow dissolve into the "sufficiency of names" (66). I have indicated the problem resident within this microcosm, i.e. the level of involvement in phenomenological poetics, silent echoes of an implicit hinterland, and the breakdown of craft into thematic, technique often falling into reflection. It is a poetic site that Burnside has yet to develop sufficiently well into a new disposition, although it is raised to a new level in TLT. In its imagery it locates the peal of the bell, the wave that dissolves into nothingness that delimits a gap between sound and silence and highlights the attunement of the ear to the shifting soundscape of the environment; in a final ecology this reminds us of Heidegger's conception of the poetic accumulative wave ("Language in the Poem") and represented within material context by Bishop's "Roosters".

Bishop's sensitivity to the cry suggests modern attunement that knows that to answer nature's call is to "penetrate the veil of Nature's purity" (Bate Song 67), that a response would instil retreat yet to also acknowledge that we must supersede the notion that art is the perpetration of violence. Our modern techne is a stillness that works behind the possibilities of language: to Heidegger it is the "peal of stillness" that as utterance is neither a relation that precedes vocalization nor a relationship established by

representation following the event, but a *presence* that can be *sounded for mortal hearing* (Poetry 188-208). It is the danger in the saving of language (Heidegger Question). Burnside's interwoven fabric of intertext and geographic history is a web of difference that offers this to the reader that holds each poem closely to the ear and is open to the resonances that operate on each subtle frequency therein. It is a question of judgement if one reads this in terms of poetic success or as an enduring disposition with no escape.

#### IV.B. Conclusion

A significant motif in this collection is an attention to hands and handiwork. That Wordsworth's ideal resource comes from the "Atlantic Main" (Home MS.D 801-802) suggests a body of strength and shorthand for place or mainland. These are embodied principles, but the abbreviation "main" connotes the heraldic term for a hand, thus the marshalling of arms is given new inflection to emphasize work over prayer (as with Wordsworth's faith in the labourers of the vale (469-645)) as the source of deep dwelling. Extending the final image of ANS's clutching hand of insecurity and desire, Burnside places the clasped hand of prayer and the weather-torn labourers' hands to foreground his unique sense of the built environment and the cultivation of nature that has been italicised by a post-Puritan, individualist pietism. Hands take of the sacrament and disperse world amongst community but are absent in the act of receiving from the host: they represent the thin double edge to techne that poetry precariously rides across intuition and conception, experience and recollection. Here we read Burnside's conception of self-forgetting attending to a larger sacrificial obligation than technologies of control or force. I have indicated this by attending to poetic



textures. Burnside's post-pastoral articulation of the crisis recognizes that survival will be possible only if nature becomes something knowingly maintained, manipulated, designed, and commoditized: "no longer different from other material products" (Kerridge "Small" 188). It is thus that the poetry dispatched in loose and unskilled fragments could be read as a means to further continuum, thematic, and oeuvre rather than offer accomplished music but to promote careful techne. Yet that sympathy towards emergence may be, however, in the final analysis, to overstate the historical as a means to guarantee the craft too far.

The emphasis on death and graveyards in this collection is married to Burnside's relinquishment of Wordsworth's unambivalent unification with God in his desire to go out into the unfixed world. This is not as contradictory as it appears. Wordsworth's unification leads to an "internal brightness" (Home 886), an immortality in a world yet to arrive. Burnside evokes this in "8 a.m. Near Chilworth" and "Pleroma" (above), but Wordsworth's version is significant, for it suggests not the silent company of death as union (906) but a vital life-force. While Wordsworth has no ecological language to secure this, his mind presses "Inherent things from casual, what is fixed / From fleeting" (1031-2) in his address to God, which could suggest, in its constitution of an ecological voice of disparate unities, the promotion of a wide range of metaphysical interfaces over monotheism. Burnside, conversely, will accept the transitory nature of Being with the same metaphysical fervour derived from geological kinship and the creative will to sustain livelihood as cultural and evolutionary becoming and freedom.

Fluidity and stability provide an ecological gloss to Burnside's concern for identity and home. The terminus to the collection in "Roads" emphasizes departure and signifies the ongoing process of world reflected in the mutability of self. However, it has similar

undertones to Frost's poem "The Pasture" (North of Boston). The desire to go out into the world and the willingness to confess this despite the conflict it might entail -- a particular New England variation of what Heidegger meant by "passing by... the hidden site... of nearness" (Question 33), where both ordering and saving are irresistible and in restraint -- posits a model of self-reliant assertion and temperance. In Burnside it is an abaxial move or turning away that has understood the need for the concept of the nature of human beings otherwise no sense can be made of them (sometimes) being alienated. This is aspect by aspiration, which carries the sense of abandonment in dwelling (Harrison Forests 265). In Burnside's craft it also indicates the problematic of operating within the phenomenological realm, or forwarding poetic temperance that may either frustrate a readership wishing to be moved along without jarring, or remain transcendent if not historicized. That this has been clarified but not finalized suggests that Burnside can pursue relinquishing human techne via other means.

## 5. Ecology

This chapter is divided into three sections representing three attempts at reading TLT, progressing to more radical criticism in the third move. Respectively: three figures (Shepard, Benjamin, and Paz) qualify Burnside's Rilkean lament; structure and intertext require a view of TLT as literary ecology; the enunciative shift within I/We politics suggests a heterophenomenological semiosphere of dispossession. Here, materialist, holistic thinking negotiates the danger of how empiricism can slip into Idealism if unaware of the subject of perception or the poetics of ecological consciousness; TLT's phenomenological forms, therefore, suggest that context and relation viewed as dynamic agency are integral to our understanding of being-in-the-world.

### I. Traditional Criticism and the Hinterland

The interesting question regarding Burnside's phenomenology might not be its role in his poetic development but his coming to view it as part of a dispossessed world. What Burnside is able to imagine and construct is not necessarily co-terminus with his poetic achievement -- that which Crawford identifies as a "'poetico-eco-philosophical' perception" of a science of dwelling. What is true is that Burnside remains clear sighted about the implications of his practice. The deployment of world-to-mind agencies/dynamics does not suggest a paradigm of the subject and floating empirical phenomena, any more than the use of qualia makes his poems nature poems. They suggest thought as action.

Furthermore, a purely phenomenological approach to TLT could not involve authorial will to the degree that I choose to examine Burnside's allusions and appropriations as determining factors to the reception of his poetry. On an initial reading, these figures and my focus upon their thoughts de-centre Burnside's work, but I stress that they are forwarded to see how his poetry is centred by these texts, and while constructed by the poet these paradoxically offer ecology of making that undermines a sense of individual authorial intention. This craft represents neither a systematic theory nor counterintuitive configuration but a web that provides an alternative

sense to a 'full' ecopoetic in TLT.

I begin my chapter here, with Burnside's ecology of male thinkers from the twentieth century, offering me a base to reflect upon structure and thinking, how form and content reflect each other to an extensive degree. This structuralist critical mode dissipates in this chapter's second section as I shift to a position on intertext, yet it is reclaimed to a degree as I return to uncover aspects of form in TLT. This tension bears the hallmarks of a response to an ecopoetic that is both in the moment and offering a point of reflection, a science of experience and a point of contact. I see these as a singular, dynamic, creative agency of structure and decentering, conceiving and offering potential outside the conception (or originaive act), and thus forward the idea of thinking as kōan before moving into a realm of phenomenological criticism in the third section. This dynamic, while underpinned by theoretical moves, is a concept or energy that is let free by the chapter's structure as a means to evoke the phenomenological and to resonate with the main emphasis in this collection: binding and loosening, gravity and light. It is given particular emphasis in the final two subsections that are presented as interchangeable units of the thesis to underline the possibility of combining acts of gathering and freedom, having otherness in relation. I offer this as a means towards an understanding of Burnside's poetics of relinquishment that is articulated by a Taoist inflection to Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" (Harmonium) throughout TLT. The extension to the Pragmatist representation of "uncontainability and irreducible plurality" symbolized by the bird (Eckhart 114) provides criticism with a perspective that reads the poet transforming Modernism by amplifying a two-dimensional representation of a process - the historical and imaginative interplay distilled by Burnside's Marxist-

Surrealist perspective -- into a hologram of a woven knot: modernized Romantic co-creation as human ecological outlook upon consciousness and world (Burnside Wild Reckoning 19). I begin to clarify this through a perspective external to Burnside's poetics.

#### I.A. Shepard's Mutual Interdependence

Shepard's Lacanian semiotics argues that language structures the unconscious. His trilogy on animals, the human, and nature (Animals, Tender Carnivore And The Sacred Game, 1973, Nature) argues that culture traps humans in early adolescence, which reduces intimacy with the wild, offering life devoid of natural psychogenetic development that humans need.<sup>64</sup> The Orwellian undertone implies that we are growing in our alienation from roots in nature -- that which made imagination and intelligence possible for the human -- as biodiversity (i.e. elements of our language, our biological creative vocabulary) is reduced (Animals). It is stressed that we lack a vision where interdependence between language and culture is inclusive of animals and terrain. Shepard's notion of 'minding' clarifies this relationship:

What is meant here is something more mutually and functionally interdependent between mind and terrain, an organic relationship between the environment and the unconscious, the visible space and the conscious, the ideas and the creatures (Animals 35).

The negation to the fall into domestication is used as epigraph to the first section of TLT, and informs the central line "homesick for the other animals" ("History" (1); "The Light Trap") -- that which is the volume's conceptual core, (Funk interview 10) -- pregnant both with desire for equation with the other and the lament for the loss of the other. The point of relation as written in "History" (1),

---

<sup>64</sup> Also Shepard, The Others: How Animals Made Us Human (1996).

below, is crucially significant to an understanding of this volume and Burnside's versions of Stevens.

Since we have always shared all things with [the gods] and have always had a part of their strength and, certainly, all of their knowledge, we shared likewise in this experience of annihilation. It was their annihilation, not ours, and yet it left us feeling... dispossessed and alone in a solitude ("Two Or Three Ideas", Opus 206-207).

While Burnside registers the loss of species, Stevens is speaking of the end of human belief in a particular style. He is also speaking of art as a "social substitute" for the loss of Gods: the progression towards an ideal through harmony and cooperation (Carroll "Stevens" 88-89). Language as part of natural selection suggests that discrimination, differentiation, and memorialization are instruments of social adaptation to nature. Modern poetry -- to Stevens, oscillating between the polarized cultures of print orientation and sound orientation as creations of the imagination -- can store the diversity of world into word images in its particular taxonomy. This would relieve Stevens' anxiety facing annihilation not by repopulating the deserted house but to recognize that the Gods "came to nothing" (206). Burnside thinks of this within a phenomenological frame taking nothingness as the current state of new beginnings. My thesis has been outlining the tenure of interreigns within and outwith emphases on the provisional. I now situate this by reading Burnside's signposts.

Shepard embeds his conceptualization of taxonomy within a thesis that argues for children to participate empathetically with nature in order to fuel the right need for an objective schema for our relationship. Taxonomy represents the shift from empirical particularity and diversity to conceptual generality and simplicity, the ordering of accumulated encounters of the non-human; its discovery of unity in diversity can mature the brain by operating

distinctions given through the operations of language, which can enable new and unknown, proper and mature encounters. Therefore, named images are a means to our own behaviour, entering our consciousness as subject, what Shepard's anthropology has called the element of mastery within the "inner-zoo" (Animals 14). Burnside's mastery comes from Rilkean poetics of nostalgia indebted to Benjamin.

#### I.B. Benjamin: Language towards History and the Creaturely

De Man's reading of Benjamin in the posthumous "Conclusions: Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator'" (Resistance) while suspicious of intralingual equivalence of signifier and signified, emphasizes the need for the political stance that is resident in Wordsworth: to understand natural changes from the perspective of history rather than history from the perspective of natural changes. This is the Hegelian ripening of world through man's actions. Burnside's use of Benjamin in TLT takes the penultimate sentence from "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man" (1916), and places it as epigraph to his poem on world language, or earth song, "On Kvaloya". This links to Burnside's contemplation of history in a wide sense that involves the creaturely, as such it conforms to Buell's writerly ethics of not using nature as backdrop but manifests presence that suggests human history implicated in natural history (Environmental 7-8). We have to translate Benjamin in TLT:

The language of nature is to be compared to a secret password, which passes on each post the next in its own language, contents of the password (Selected 74).

Benjamin is speaking of language as the expression of the aspect of mental life that is communicable. He is drawing from language in the wide sense of a method of expression, not particularly a lexical field. For Benjamin, man's mental being communicates in his language

and it follows that in the naming process the essence of his being lies. This does not enter negative post-structuralism (Rigby), for it makes two qualifications: (i) that world communicates to man *first* by stepping before him, by which he is able to name and go beyond himself; (ii) furthermore, that a use *in* language rather than *by* language is how the mental being communicates to God. Naming *is this manner* for Benjamin, completing God's creation as a creative power set free in man (68). It is a form of Emersonian spirit and co-creation come home.

Benjamin makes a further distinction between revelation and poetry. The former is a mental region that does not know inexpressibility but is wholly dependent on the language of man; the latter rests not in this spirit of language but on that part of things in which they communicate themselves. This bears direct relation to Heidegger's notion of unconcealment. To Benjamin this, however, has not remained creative in man; it must be "fertilized" to forward the language of things themselves "from which in turn, soundlessly, in the mute magic of nature, the word of God shines forth" (69). It is the site between invocation and soliloquy that must be recharged, the stillness and quietude of Coleridgean poetics:

If silence is a re-drawing of speech, not its private withdrawal, absence can be commuted to an inflection of how others are present as one way of opening to an other (Larkin 115).

However, with Benjamin's post-Romanticism in mind, to understand this in terms of a "password" shared between sentinels -- an idea of poet as guardian but also one figure in a web of bodies that must interact -- one must look to the fertilization process as a form of translation and means to interface with others. This suggests the muteness in which things shine forth reconfigured as reverse echo of the nameless (nature) into the named (human realm) by promoting the



named (human) into the nameless (nature). I have argued for nature coming to mind in earlier chapters and I see this as co-creative with dispossession poetics (often viewed as the opposite direction). In Benjamin it is understood more simply in terms of that which is sustained and not reduced in the translation process in Being. I shall forward the human translated into the nameless through Weilean poetics of dispossession in the third section of this chapter. It is the signal central position that I wish to forward in my reading of TLT and I offer this initially in my reading of "On Kvaloya", below.

Benjamin views this translation-password process as "continua of transformation" (70), the development of "spontaneity" (69) or way of things becoming perfect. It is this which carries the non-communicable or non-referential element, the symbolic function which gives the language of man a "purified" essence; "the uninterrupted flow of this communication runs through the whole of nature", the password and passage "imbued with a nameless, unspoken language, the residue of the creative word of God" (74). This quality is something that Benjamin articulates as the expressionless and immediate in the essence of a translation, the poetic process of continuum and renewal in the life of an artwork ("The Task of the Translator", 1923 - a timely meditation contemporaneous to Williams' paean to spring, Rilke's elegies, and Stevens' Harmonium). This should exist without being (or the need to be) channelled to a responsive agent, or consumer. The work is to promote the history at work in the evolution of translation as energy in itself over psychologism or anticipatory determinism. Romantic politics and craft reverberate in this post-Kantian realm of ethics that does not distil resources into standing reserve (objectness). In Benjamin the promotion of life and sensationalism as the outline to difference in history between artwork or world and human, suggests the need for a consideration of time. The promotion of history at work and the time in which human

action evolves and participates recalls Frost's depiction of manual labour (North of Boston, "From Plane to Plane" An Afterword in Collected), and Wordsworth's poetics of dwellers; crucially however, Benjamin's eschatology is motivated by ethics where reductionism, Idealism or an absolute is inconsolably quashed.

#### I.B.1. Mourning and Melancholia

Hanssen reads Benjamin's efforts to differentiate his writing from Heidegger's as one crystallized in the concept of the kreatur, the de-limitation of the human subject within a thesis of natural history that incorporates transience and decay: a non-human history coloured by a critique of the philosophy of the subject (2). It offers insight into the possibility of the named entering the nameless. Benjamin's attentiveness injects contingency and alterity into the idea of nature (and transcendental philosophy) thus standing as one of many significant modifications to the Linnaean model of an infinite chain of being that rose during eighteenth century historiography before the advent of evolutionary theory. Furthermore, Benjamin's humanistic subject is considered in terms of the present being salvaged by the incomplete potential of the past. This, although aimed against Fascism and being anchored in terms of anti-foundational human freedom, takes on morality located in the realm of action ("Fate and Character", 1919) and the politics of destruction ("The Critique of Violence", 1927) as the contact with nature's forces that are violent and revolutionary.

These counters are self-generational. Their non-foundational origin purports a new ontology of vitalism not unlike hypotheses that dispute hereditary mechanisms. Moreover, as state in-between identities, they can be read as an echo of the symbolic destructive angel of history, neither melancholic agent (as in late Benjamin) nor

hermeneut (as in traditional angelology).<sup>65</sup> However, while Benjamin articulates voracity and the pursuit driven by desire, Burnside commutes love. He now shares the attention toward his partner (TAD) with that of his newborn son in this collection, charging the poetics of husbandry with modalities of the domestic and authoritative dispositions. It is thus that a model of decreation as openness not desire, derived from Stevens is more vital to this investigation than Benjamin's revolutionary creationism (despite its emphasis on contingency and otherness). Union, separation, and poetic consciousness, therefore, require further investigation.

### I.B.2. The Post-Rilkean Song of the Earth

For Rilke, animals present back to humans the notion of submerged humanism in the recesses of the heart, the potential of which is to be gained via loss of self. Heidegger argues that the human needs the animal's face (Antlits) to see the open. In "What Are Poets For?" (1946) the need for the non-rational is motioned less than the idea of being brought into relation with God via human distinction to creatures. It is thus that "nature" in Heidegger's Rilke is not divisional, as it "is not contrasted to history", but it is life, not biological, but physis: "Being in the sense of all beings as a whole" (Poetry 101). Thus minding the animals reflects back upon the human world and evokes a German-Jewish tradition of the creaturely to emphasize possibilities of relation. In the fourth of the Duino elegies contemplating playfulness and harmony, Rilke asserts that: "our blood does not forewarn us / like migratory birds" (2-3). The fact that the animals are world-poor suggests that man as world forming is not absorbed into the environment but can view it as a

---

<sup>65</sup> The direct engagement: John Burnside, "Three Enquiries Concerning Angels (After Paul Klee)," Poetry London, 51 (2005): 4-5.

site of possibility: the project or mode of being more than the perspective or experience of one person -- I visit this in the heterophenomenology of I/We politics (sec. III.B.1.).

The distinction between weltbildend and weltos to Heidegger is that an enormous sadness burdens the latter animal realm (Fundamental 273). In Rilke's fourth elegy man is a latecomer to himself; in the eighth elegy the human is backward looking, his eyes like "traps" surrounding the world as it "emerge[s into] freedom" (4). The metaphor of fleeing from the womb is the pain or "enormous sadness" (42) which, due to memory of the first and now distant home, provides the condition that "we live here, forever taking leave" (73). This is an unmistakably Burnsidean sentiment. Respite from this comes where there is no "World", "that pure / unseparated elements which one breathes / without desire and endlessly *knows*" (16-19), it is nothingness as "unuberwachte" (18): free without burden of supervision and healed in "timeless / stillness" (17-18) that relinquishes the vision of the future but enters into the "boundless, / unfathomable" (36-37). Value in loss once more, but now it is the mysterious site of creation pregnant with possibility that can be viewed as a path or site for the progression of man's actions. Symbolically this connects us to Stevens' blackbird and Wordsworth's streams. Burnside reflects upon this version of homesickness in "History" (1) developed in "History" (2) and "A Theory of Everything". Before visiting these poems I read "On Kvaloya" to provide an insight into the richness of the ideas of the collection before distilling them into the Rilkean mode outlined.

### I.B.3. On Kvaloya

"On Kvaloya" is a nexus of many motifs and themes of the collection: home to the blackbird -- the signified nominative act highly charged

by Burnside's bird of mourning, and with Heaney in mind, "portent of death and loss" ("Underground" 18) -- the rim of sound, the naming process, perpetuation, and inattention. These are set alongside 'stillness' and 'turning' as attunement and praxis: time and body commingled. Burnside hosts keynotes as a single scale meditating upon the concepts of the *indeterminate* and the *prepared* over the fixed. This is an ecological statement of provisionality (or incomplete evolution) that should encourage an ethics of freedom and release (or inaction as enowning). It is positioned to negate enframing, exploitation, and derivative and impotent politics. To the phenomenologist it is a beginning (newness) that is becoming (continua).

The poem makes an explicit move from linguistic entrapment to Ancient Indian Dharmic religion (to the oldest literate community in India renowned for their fylfot, the holiest symbol or peaceful swastika of "well being" now eclipsed by twentieth century usage). The section titles read, "Learning to Talk", "Metamorphosis", "Tern" and "Jain"; they are attempts to transform the human into bird and make evitable self-control, spiritual independence, and equality. This is the human into the nameless as in the final movement's presentation of the body and mind "attuned, / to gravity" (4: 31-32) offering Burnside's version of moksha, the realization of the nature of the soul. This should be viewed microscopically, too.

The first section begins with nine sestets with each distinct unit written like a fencing volte that could stand on its own, again outplaying the form of the collection in each particular breath. These toy with "the rim of sound" (1: 6), "inattention" (18), and the "still[ness]" (19) of home in the final nine-line strophe, all working to complement the quantitative metre through their clarity. The first phrase relates to Heidegger's notion of nearness given by the property of language "to sound and ring and vibrate, to hover and

tremble" (Language 98), the poetic saying of world as projection of energies. The others suggest passivity (or the relinquished 'I') within attunement and the repetition of the provision of endurance in nature viewed as a momentary balance before fulfilment, respectively. I explicate these in respect to the collection as a whole while simultaneously wishing to indicate here how form and subject interrelate.

The second section is a sonnet fragmented into two quatrains and sestet but is looser than its predecessor and crafted rhymelessly, suggesting an increase in "a foreign tongue" (7) and the "unsure" (12), yet also plugged into the "certainties" (11) of the meadows -- a version of foreignness as fact (Bishop) and extension to exilic consciousness of TAD. The last sections, "Tern" and "Jain" are pinned into triplets and quatrains respectively, propagating expansive space that would complement the loosening of the first half of the poem. "Tern" is composed of five triplets but only three semantic units. The first short objective reportage of clipped lines moves into a subjective keyhole that sustains into the remainder of the poem, but I read more than trilogic form promoting the 'I':

I've heard it said:  
 we are  
 what we imagine;  
  
 but just now,  
 turning for home,  
 I caught the storm  
  
 shaping a bird  
 from the swerve  
 of the not-yet-seen. (3: 7-15)

This is familiar short-breath poetics to the Burnside reader who has a pocketbook Husserl, but I suggest that it has a distinct charge resting in the word "turning" as a singular force, unremarkable and

distant.<sup>66</sup> The use of migratory eider witnessed in the opening of TAD are at home here in "the fleeting rain" (3: 6), as with the tern, and blackbird, offering a confusion of sea-birds and land-birds eventually melding into the variegated, chequered magical flora in the final line of the poem. The temporality is Rilkean (non-human) forewarning that Burnside encourages us to read in the non-Idealist self echoed in the democratically enchained birdlife. I read "caught" in the sense of infection over entrapment, suggesting a mind of the elements. I propose that the "swerve" is the worlding of nature, the movements that turn our sensibilities and root us in place. These scaffold the "not-yet-seen" as three-way compound, an incredible compression of: (i) "not seen" -- for this is a multi-sensual listening self we read of; (ii) "not yet" -- the world in process for the present participle is held in the "just now" (10) of the reporting process; and (iii) "yet-seen" -- invisible but minded, felt or registered in the turning of body, mind and world as one.

The final movement represents the illumination of the other world, or epiphanical attunement held in the connection to nature. It portends Burnside's later prose versions of this epiphany as *turning* with the sway of the world -- i.e. the encounter of a flock of the incredibly seasonally camouflaged ptarmigan ("Learning To Fly" 113), and the non-transcendental heightening or stillness of the otherworld, symbolized by isolation and silence, threaded by the call of the red-winged blackbird ("Travelling into the Quotidian" 60, 70). We circle back to Stevens, Emerson and Coleridge, yet the enactive in TLT is threaded by morality and concern for animals, thus evoking Rilkean homesickness:

I stopped dead: in a clump of buttercups

---

<sup>66</sup> As emphasized in "Some More Thoughts on the Notion of a Soul" ("Poems").

a creature stirred; then far out in the grass  
 another wave, until I realised  
 that everything was moving, one long tide

of animals  
 in flight from where I stood,  
 and for that moment, I was powerless,  
 afraid to move, inept, insensible. (4: 13-20)

The death of the self leads to a new brotherhood "of animals" and rooting in place. Burnside's use of the "wave" represents a phase in personal history, the play of wind on the grass, and the global interlocked biosphere underlined by the grammatical movement inwards from colon to semi-colon to comma, intimately related to movement beyond the 'I' and the senses. Breath, undulation, and mind are processes expanding as one. This realization and attainment of powerlessness heals the homesick and while it offers the "insensible" it turns the (non-)transcended self to home as neutral, temporal unplanned and contingent gathering suggested by the verb/collective noun "clump". Furthermore, the significant line is given over to the seamless order "of animals" alone, indicative of the progression in form of the poem as a whole from the tight and military arrangements to the shaping of breath in the final section's quatrains -- another stress underlining power (in terms of looseness and binding), solidarity, and attunement. We have been witness to these before but they have not been wrapped by the creaturely in the same manner that TLT evokes the writings of Shepard and Benjamin.

Rilke's reconciling poeisis marks "the divinization of the immanent world" (Bate Song 263) and the potential for action or new ecological praxis. However, one must read Burnside's voice differentiated from the Romantic point of alienation, the position on the edge of experience. His model of absence (from within homesickness) is neither a literature of the particular nor abstract idea but is the collapse of these in opposition to forward his model of the continuum across contingent and non-contingent realms. For



Burnside, Rilkean sensitivity enables the ear to attune to how world enfolds the mental being. It is a form of death discovered through creation.

#### I.C. Paz: Relinquishment and Creation vs. Discovery

Paz has brought Burnside to understand that the acceptance of death as a larger part of life in the critique of rectilinear time is one that finds the connection between heaven and earth represented in the continuum across present and past. Paz's reading of Michaux as entrance into "vortexes... interweavings of being" (Alternating 78) in the transport of language as medium "clearing a path" into unity, plurality, and chaos seems of use to Burnside's ecological post-Romantic ethic.<sup>67</sup> Paz states that original disorder informs time and allows faceless intersection that is the continuation of being (79) and he mobilizes Heidegger to express the poetic revelation of simultaneity and non-contradiction of living and dying (Bow 121-139). These are made hybrid as a means to an insight into poetry's ability to recreate time as an echo of the world's movements; as such it relates to the notion of "objective chance" (155). I find that this should not be considered outside the emphasis in TLT that promotes a sense of self as creature by finding the self before the creator. The faceless intersection is the Weilean poetic. Objective chance relates to the backward compatibility of being thrown forward as a spirit which acts as feedback loop to any emphasis on essences.

Paz clarifies the working of nature into mind as the Surrealist critique of subject-object relations where "on the one hand, the world evaporates and changes into an image of consciousness; on the other, consciousness is a reflection of world" (Bow 153). Inspiration -- a "poetic force" outside self and outside creator --

---

<sup>67</sup> See ch. 4, p. 253 for Burnside's use of Michaux.

suppresses an antinomy between subject and object and any hierarchy between the two as a means to consecrate the alien other. The reliance upon this to be incarnate forces a new beginning. Paz's version of Romantic wind and Modernist snow is attributed to an echo of St Augustine and Tertullian (Paz 246) and considered in terms of an invitation to support or oppose action, the song not to consecrate history but to be incarnated in history (212). It is Burnside's political position in TLT's two "History" poems and it enables both directions (nature to mind, mind to nature) via nameless fusion that does not eradicate identity nor confuse intention/comportment. Paz's development of church fathers affords life viewed within a Surrealist exposition that leans heavily on André Breton and thinks of the end of history where man is master of his own consciousness as an evolutionary Marxism. As the discovery of world "in that which emerges as fragment and dispersion" is to present and discover "otherness" ("Signs in Relation", 1967, Bow 240-241): "being and not being the same as other animals" (246).

To Breton the discovery and the inspirational force arise from an independent consciousness that is made whole by surprise, intimacy, and a return to that which has been witnessed before -- creation's collective character that is an involuntary organization that fights censorship or doctrinism (Manifestos 153). Burnside distilled this into the poem "Being and Time" as the dialectic of departure and return transformed by Surrealist intuition to go beyond the self: "something we knew without knowing, as we knew" (14). Breton claimed this in Nadja (1928) as: "that taste for searching in the folds of material, in knots of wood, in the cracks of old walls, for outlines which are not there but can readily be imagined" (121-122). It is the furthest stretch from the Puritan reading of signs; here the beyond is in this intuitive life, less as an enigma or pure source but the mental landscape and world dissolved without perspectival

horizons. Phenomenology, therefore, has its role.

It is one thing to claim that the real and imagined cease to be contradictions (Manifestos 123) but to forward the realization of spirit via particular automatic expression requires clarification:

[The] manifestation-form of external necessity as it makes a way in the human unconscious. It is moreover apt to be brought to the front rank of preoccupations by war, in which the strength of calculations appears to be continuously limited by that unknown, the oscillation of a certain chance ("Situation" 77).

The present thesis could emphasize the new politicized spirit "in a state of grace with chance" replacing the Orpheus complex with the "geometric locus of coincidences" as a means to explaining necessity and freedom (Autobiography 106). I have read this from another angle sensitive to the disposition that Breton states as attempting to trace the phenomena that the human mind perceives "as belonging to separate causal series [which come] so close together that they actually merge into one another". Burnside twists the possibility of encounters able to inspire non-conformism and irreverence into understanding the way of the outside world that answers an inner question, at the core of which is the desire to relate and care. This is enfolded, finally, into the Stevensian decreed unity, the Weilian poetic. I have elected to present this last (sec. III.), to read it within yet after the tension between structure and thought.

## II. Structure and Thought

A non-parasitical voice that has no inherent demands upon its laws of reception -- the time required for contemplation, evaluation, and internalization unencumbered by the technology used in its distribution processes -- can reconnect to the contours of its historical and material reality, the time and space of its unique



expansive verse of TLT, given its highest inflection through an emphasis on certainty and spontaneity in the volume's final line where the individual man, woman, and blackbird, resonate within a single array: the named singing themselves into existence. It instances "a sense of the oneness [Hannah] Arendt [1906-1975] recognizes as predating the descriptive energies of language" (Burnside xii in Stevens Selected). I shall return to these ideas and this poem at the chapter's close. Deconstructing or de-mixing manifest form in Burnside's poetics can be fruitful, but I indicate that it attends to a return to a form of holism.

#### II.A. Form

Burnside's most intricately conceptual collection decisively enforces themes of division and unity through twenty-seven poems divided into three sections of nine. These are further split into three groups of triplets with each poem representing singularity and trilogy (as with the secular man, woman, and blackbird). These divisions entitled "Habitat", "Phusis", and "World" relate to Burnside's ecological appropriation of Heideggerian thought; the view of these at distance reads a progression from animals to perception to the fusion of the natural and the mental. Furthermore, each triplet contains a single poem that stresses one of: (i) the relationship of mind and world; (ii) the condition of the human (homesickness and the possibility of Orphic resolution to exile in language); and (iii) the need for attunement. These also represent the thematic watermark to sections one to three, respectively, when viewed at a distance, too. The ordering of these within each triplet is shuffled, and in the manner of a scale that is widened by the gap between the notes thickening, these triplets are spirited from these initial concepts towards an emphasis on perception, process, and personhood interfacing with

division titles. This expansive emphasis in its last phase (personhood) evokes inattentiveness (modern disinterest), the absolute and the local, and unity, respectively in the collection's progression through sections. Furthermore, unity, as the last counter is significant as it is housed in the final poems named "History" to the divisions "Habitat" and "Phusis" and at its widest (i.e. worldhood or ecohood not selfhood) in "A Theory of Everything" the last poem of the third section "World". I claim priority to these poems for an initial reading of the collection and I urge that these three emphases operate non-paradoxically and in non-opposition. The combinations and threads across poems locate a post-dialectical marriage where reading and then re-reading the collection works with this dynamic; altogether it is not dissimilar to yogic practice.

#### II.B. Thought (and Kōan)

Burnside reads the contemporary scene in America as one of dissident poetics defined by insistence upon "the provisional, on the dialectic, on the *bringing forth of the thought process*, on the metaphorical" ("Mind" 69, my emphasis). This in turn lays challenge to "the apparent consensus [which] is anti-intellectual, fundamentalist, literal-minded, self-righteous and xenophobic to a degree that has not been since the [19]50s" (67). Burnside's task is to marry ideal and real, to fuse the empirical to the imagination and make mind and world inhabit the same neural-material pathway to bring the heart and mind together as singular breathing in a new poetic. The introduction of a Surrealist indistinction between the unconscious and the visible attains this, and by an involvement in the way of thought of the Eastern kōan -- the Chán (Zen) Buddhist statement inaccessible to rational thought -- cyclical nature evokes interdependency between mind and matter.







(and of possible fictions), of which both the description and the state are constituted through the lexicon of nature. This colours the perspective of history.

The only laws of matter are those which our minds must fabricate, and the only laws of mind are fabricated for it by matter (TLT 21).

Burnside's quotation from the Edinburgh-born theoretical physicist, James Clerk Maxwell is located as epigraph to the second section "phusis" (Greek: kruptesthai) beside Heraclitus' claim that nature loves to hide, a problem without a solution. As an enlightenment perspective on the human investigation of the natural world partnered by early Greek thought, Burnside's appropriation of a circular equation can be seen as non-duality that outstrips pathetic fallacy via kōan thinking. The human ecological influence of Paul Shepard best explains this. Shepard restates Maxwell:

If the mind discovers structure in nature because its own structure is a produce of the order of nature, then such comparison is not a discovery or an original insight, but is inevitable (Animals 36).

Burnside uses the scientific edge delivered from the idea of the defiance to logical unravelling (kōan), given ecological and anthropological linguistic thesis by Shepard, to develop his poetics and inform his thoughts on history. Here, intertextual gatherings play a role and offer an inner place turned outward: the paradoxical organically structured event of experience augmented by reflection of both memories and the need to communicate forwards in time. Intertext also brings into relief the poetics of experience located in the body and mind responding in the moment of (re-)telling. By such transmissions and discoveries, the poetry urges, consciousness is woven.

## II.C. Intertext as Literary Ecology

Following Rigby (Topologies 13), I stated that the poetics of ecology offer semantic webs.<sup>69</sup> I am taking this a stage further by offering intertextual networks as poetic sites that marry de Man's post-Romanticism to Burnside's metaphysical inflection of the material, "to understand natural changes from the perspective of history" (de Man Resistance 83). I read a parallel and complementary initiative in the intertextual event, which Frow reads as having "instead of the social *determination* of the literary norm... the social text as *content* of the literary text" (Marxism 127). My critical method prioritizes the imperative to exploit the emphasis on relations, offering representation in semiotic terms, immanent in structure (conceptual form and intertextual event) and as a historically specific system, a social text or fragmentary tradition that I chose over hub-spoke topologies (centralization). Intertextuality draws links between signs separated in conceptual space whereby new ideas come into being; as an intersubjective space. Moreover, as part of bringing forth the world collectively, it offers human semiosis as part of a wider cultural semiotic system. It is a form of ecocritical modelling in itself where the *movement among ideas is stressed more than the ideas themselves*. I thus wish to consider this model as a field of consciousness operating in TLT.

With respect to the decentred poem, or devolved ecology of intertextual site, I would like to make a distinction between two generic forms of intertextuality (each having multiple subsets therein). The first, I should like to call 'textual', the later, 'integral'. The first is constituted by grammatical and lexical manifestations of the intertextual event, micro-units of signification, texture, and music e.g. the use of triad, variation of

---

<sup>69</sup> ch. 1, p. 70.

foot, end-line emphasis, vocabulary -- all parts of a larger matrix within an ever growing or emergent structure. My readings of Burnside's poetry under the influence of Bishop, Williams, and Dickinson (and to a much lesser degree certain elements of Stevens and Wordsworth) operate on this level; it is where Bloom locates ratios of poetic revision (Anxiety).<sup>70</sup> For example, Burnside's use of the word 'depends' in TLT's "Of Gravity and Light" (l: 9), is not only poignant as line-ending, but Williamsesque in the manner that it forwards innocence, knowledge, and trickery shorn of metaphor yet with a subtext of play and risk, in language and in world, as with "The Red Wheelbarrow" (Spring and All 22, Imaginations 138). The second form, the integral, is largely constituted by more explicit signposting to the eye, such as the peritext (i.e. epigraph, titling etc.), which are hypogrammatic events, linking texts relationally to already existent signifying words or texts of the past. I have chosen to emphasis this form of intertextuality in TLT, especially the references to Stevens, Benjamin, and Shepard, for my thesis stipulates this collection as a highly conceived work of form, viewing the frame of sources over corpus but ultimately interdependent. I borrow the distinction from John Frow's semiotic split between the matrix (textual) and hypogram (integral) -- his extension to Micheal Riffaterre's structuralist poetics -- viewing the matrix as "the elaboration of a text from a semantic core", and the hypogram in relation to other texts (Marxism 152), the latter being the thematic field that I label integral. I relate this to

---

<sup>70</sup> Bloom's map of misreading is primarily concerned with poetic intertexts emphasizing agon, or the conflict of power. TLT promotes collusion, interfusion, and community. Of the revisionary ratios offered by Bloom, clinamen and tessera enable a view on Burnside's versions of predecessors, and kenosis and askesis offer further insight into the poetics of purgation and curtailment (vis-à-vis relinquishment). I feel that daemonization -- promoting the power in the parent that does not belong to that site alone -- is the most useful in tackling the metaphysical aspect of this collection.

dynamics operating at the periphery of Lotman's semiosphere.

#### II.C.1. The Ecological Semiosphere as Intertext

The Russian semiotician, Yuri Mikhailovich Lotman develops Vladimir Ivanovich Vernadsky's understanding of Edward Suess' concept of the biosphere: life as a geological force that shapes the earth. Lotman's model of intertextuality, the semiosphere, argues for an ensemble of semiotic formations which precedes and becomes the condition for existence of an isolated language: without environment there is no particular manifestations -- a position that complements Shepard's thesis deployed by Burnside in TLT. Lotman's model of core and periphery indicates a boundary between the semiosphere (the intertextual network, reaching outwards to established relations where participants are both part of the dialogue and the space of other dialogues) and the non or extra-semiotic space (that which is not yet encountered or interfaced with). This is what Frow calls "both a part of the general discursive field and a particular mode of transformation of that field" (Marxism 127). The border acts as filter translating levels of the macro semiosphere, for each semiosphere cannot be contiguous to extra-semiotic texts. Furthermore, Lotman's model forwards atomistic complexity in signs, which he states "are immersed in a specific semiotic continuum" (206). The notion of continuum in Lotman is called the semiosphere by explicit analogy with Verndasky's use of the term biosphere, signifying the totality of living organisms. This, distinct from the realm connected to human rational activity (the noosphere) has a structural role, it is the "cosmic mechanism" that affords "planetary unity" (207): a communication process that brings forth new information on diversity and integration. My reading of TLT forwards primacy not in the individual sign, fragment, or allusion, but -- not

unlike Benjamin and Lotman -- in the unified mechanism, the totality of the greater semiosphere of isolated fragments as they relate to each other. The 'I', no longer authorial but devolved by effect; originally offered solely by metaphysical rumination, now emerges as a self-consciously aware post-Kantian collective intersection of a dynamic field.

We are sometimes  
haunted by the space  
we fill, or by the forms

we might have known  
before the names ("Septugesima" 10-13, FD)

And this was how he knew himself at last,  
the unvoiced presence shining in his eyes  
made flesh again, made whole, untouched by god ("History" (1)  
11-13, TLT)

Rather than progress that is satisfied with new designs to re-conceive old patterns, Burnside (like de Man's on Benjamin and allegory) speaks of the *historic materiality of thought*; I see this in the mode of ecology driven by Shepard (language emphasis) but inflected through the stress on points of relation extended to self-consciousness in "History" (1). I view this effecting transparency, particularly acute in this collection at the conceptual level. It is alive to the degree that TLT is a composite of intimately connected aggregates (individually and triadic elements) -- a highly interesting spatio-temporal concept enabling one to think of life constituted by and a function of the biosphere.

#### II.C.1.a. The Light Trap, Particularly

The quality of Burnside's post-modernism, heightened in TLT's eclectic aleatory poetics does suggest a critical relation to the possibility of complete relativism afforded by complicity to the

(negative?) extensions to Saussurian linguistics i.e. the inherent incoherence between signs, and the deferrals of meaning. The aspect of Burnside's verse that I am stressing in this reading forwards disseminations dependent on contingencies driven by the selections of the author. It is supported by Burnside's intertextual emphasis in TLT that acts as a form of heterophenomenology (Dennet). This, distinct from the private, traditional 'first person' paradigm, is objective (or neutral) yet involves the self in the world through the subject's self-reports and its interaction within a community (of texts and of world). I speak of this as I/We politics in this chapter.

Here, Burnside's epiphanic stance becomes critical of the authority of the subject's reports (unlike traditional phenomenology) and stresses the way things *seem to the subject* during and after experiential moment of immediacy, the resultant affect is to offer *revelation* as (and sometimes over) poeisis. This leverages the reader to read the 'I', the intertext, and the fabric of the poem that combines the two, as a means to reach a conclusion from the total data set made available to them. To Burnside, the poem and poetics cannot stand alone (or the epiphanic relation alone is not achieved in this poet's hands). The effect distils time and history as context for contemplating the movement of the poem and the movement of the mind in the poem: metaphors for our own actions once more. For example, the Husserlian experience filtered into the object that is being studied, the poetics of the (pro-heterophenomenological) semiosphere:

Four days of wind;  
a black cloud  
over Malangen.

The eider  
squabble and drowse  
in the fleeting rain.

I've heard it said:  
 we are  
 what we imagine;

but just now,  
 turning for home,  
 I caught the storm

shaping a bird  
 from the swerve  
 of the not-yet-seen. ("On Kvlaoya" 1-15)

The third section to this poem, "Tern", exploits Burnside's reading of American poetics on the level of form, while also collating TAD images of the eider in Anstruther ("The Men's Harbour") to the sea-bird of north Norway. However, this indication of place is a weak veil to the poetics that I identify here: we are a long way from the locodescriptive poem and the vocative of apostrophe uniting mind to physical environment. This section instances indissoluble union between mind and matter as fused elements of the same scene, what has been called active consciousness concerned with recalibrating itself, "the prized tension of awareness" as result of attempting an equilibrium with respect to "proximity to and distance from nature" (Slovic 353).<sup>71</sup>

The section title operates as homophone to a Heideggerian stress ('turning' Question), which is coupled to an idea of the potential in world events ("the not yet seen"). Another quick glance offers the reader three units of sense: (i) an expansive view of time and place; (ii) the momentary and particular object of study; and (iii) the third sense written over three triplets bringing the past and present 'I' into context with the play of light and movement of mind as a means to reconsider the first two units within a new whole (or consideration of internal and external), typical of Burnside's

---

<sup>71</sup> See the site of meaning as "proprioception" (Ricou "Ecotopia" 55); cf. Noë, proprioception, "the ability to keep track of one's relation to the world around one" (2) a form of perspectival self-consciousness.

triadic sense in this collection. This is particularly involved in the dual sense of agency in the line-ending "storm", offering both subject and object as the (intentional) actor that shapes the bird, the subject and third term of the piece: all in turn and collectively forwarding imagination and experience within the pull for (an indistinct) home. Furthermore, the enunciative shift and complex modality within the phenomenological account can be seen in the movement from the indicative mood, or actual state of affairs in the first two units, to the fusion of past and present as ambiguous disguised conditional (almost future perfect tense) of the present potential in the third unit, the tension and ambiguity between the double value of "shaping" (i.e. dual agency: man/wind confusion), following "caught". This, I argue, enriches the almost two-dimensional flat-pack Husserlian phenomenological realm of the poem and represents a pronominal transformation shifting closer to *nature speaking through the human* than human speaking for nature. I have moved on from structural criticism and have provided a critical model of phenomenological intertextuality.

I now develop this to articulate TLT's ecological ethic with respect to the tension between world and human agencies.

### III. (Post-)Phenomenological Poetics

The flaw in correspondence between material reality and what is present to consciousness i.e. that which has no existence independent of mental faculties, that "'refers' to, or is 'directed onto'" things (Scruton 264) positively instances the phenomenological frame, where meaning and reference is made essential to every mental act. I argue that this is not taken away but lowered in TLT as a means to enable greater letting be of the world and to challenge the pragmatic value of how categories (available for expansion, loosening and



phenomenalizing), although not explaining the world, endow the world with meaning for the human.

How to achieve this is tricky. How to sustain this across a collection is even more difficult. It appears on a first reading that TLT phenomenalizes world but posits a gap in this conception. This primarily limits anthropocentric authority (or ownership) to indicate only the sense of being *someone*. However, it also retains the possibilities of transcendence that a complete phenomenalizing of being would rule out. Is the poet offering space for a subject-independent reality prior to language or discourse? Furthermore, what are the possibilities of realism here, of the poetic act that can disclose the 'two-in-one-ness' of world (that we are apart from, and are a part of world)? Stevens writes that "realism is a corruption of reality" (Opus 192); I suggest that this space in Burnside's poetry subtracts epistemology and affords greater hermeneutic play. It does not suggest that the object of knowledge is the only reality but shows how human made centres of thought act as realities. This intellectual domain is often conceived as an event, not a thing to itself but a site of bonding between the contingent reality and the non-contingent universal: the fact of world and the fact of our comportment to it:

The trick is to create a world  
from nothing

    - not the sound the blackbird makes  
in drifted leaves...

but nothing  
    which is present in the flesh  
as ripeness is: a lifelong urgency. ("Koi" 1-4, 13-15)

We return to the statement upon fiction, and the need for the private life "that allows us to catch the fleeting and tentative glimpses of the wider order that makes for actual poems" (Burnside in Stevens

Selected ix). The declaration of the poem as an ecopoem undoes a pure ecopoeisis while also forwarding a mysterious discipline of "the individual state" which is "part alchemy, part conjuring trick" but ultimately a process that "begins and ends" in the lyrical 'I'. The positing of consciousness as phenomenological "nothing" in the opening lines to the collection neither offers a tabla rasa nor an 'I' but brings the "lifelong urgency" into relief: the quest to enter into relation and the human inevitability of attempting metaphysical knowledge, which for Burnside are collapsed as one and the same. This urgency, or desperation, however, reverse engineers the ecopoem to a degree, threads polemic into any neutrality and undermines a sense of letting be and discovery. However, "Making" (16) and process are forwarded by the *given* leaves and the *intentional* song resting in the human geography of the built environment where clouds are reflected in puddles of a space now absent of the human. The persistence of natural forms instances unexpectedness and "ambiguity" (27) of world derived not by the random association of Surrealism but by the possibilities presented by free association of movement of mind and body. All of these poetic energies effect the sense of human involvement variously.

While one can read the indication of a made site movement is depicted in the poem by the human traversing through the world and noticing things move (or not) as they move themselves (clouds in puddles). It is a declarative that claims no name for it is brokered by the poetics of the cast of mind over the poetics of verification. The consciousness of the poem is that of a wandering thinker and self-conscious phenomenological flâneur. Thus, the loose line and the view outside to dilute the self-centred frame:

they dart  
and scatter

though it seems more ritual now  
than lifelike fear                    as if they understood  
in principle  
                 but couldn't wholly grasp

the vividness of loss

and every time we gaze into this pool  
of bodies  
we will ask

how much they know of us  
and whether this  
is all illusion

like the play of light ("Koi" 64-78)

In "Koi" phenomenology can be seen to be pushed into hermeneutics seeking to understand actions by acts of rational self-projection rather than external causes. This is how we view humans in a different manner to how we view nature -- reasons and decisions over causes and predictions. Aims, emotions, and activity are terms in which the human sees the self, thus the hermeneutic dimension to phenomenology *is self-conscious* or a form of truth in art, not scientific but representative of "how men experience their conditions of life" (Eagleton 68). This may appear as further penetration into inner sense or to contract world anthropogenically and quash the ecophenomenological impulse. One response to this is to read how the poetry no longer asks questions of essence in abstraction from questions of existence: the complete phenomenological reduction (Husserl), it appears, is impossible. That which is denoted by "this" ("Koi" 76) both world and poem, suggests that language is an event we encounter, to an itinerant agent (even if contained by a circuit and therefore repetition), it is not merely the fiction that contains and creates all. Thus, Burnside offers, reality as an effect of language, a principle that is indicated but not pinned down. Here the reduction from world to idea to consciousness is negated for the opposite direction, the shift from "we" as subject to

object with feedback loop where world is viewed within the event of language, conceived by mind evidentially afforded by world. In the final analysis this ecological concept withdraws from ecological poeisis while representing the incredible difficulty of speaking for the world when neither speaking humanly nor phenomenologically.

However, a position that reads a contradiction between non-anthropocentric ecopoetics that is installed via an authorial 'I', is indebted, it appears, to too strict a focus on the authorial voice qualifying the signifying practice, a position that Burnside's desire for ego-free politics urges against. Moreover, this position has its blind-spot in not reading the 'I' as intersection, a point in a dynamic field (that which my opening chapters take particular care to foreground, especially heightened by my use of Ingold within the context of Romanticism), but wishing to posit the 'I' as a point, sometimes fixed, which misses the mediation of the literary system in a transparent and fresh mode. This can be understood well by two elements. Firstly the notion of presence (above) within a thesis of action and inaction (coloured by Burnside's hinterland threaded through the semantics of the triadic structure); secondly Frow's "enunciative shift" (Marxism 128) resulting in complex modalities (as with my reading of "Tern" above).

The second section to this chapter has prepared the reader for a loose critical method, both cautious and transparent in its application, to open the idea of the semiosphere to intertextual theory as a means to offer texts as organisms in relation to each other, without detracting from the subject of the poems under investigation. Here the human ecological emphasis in TLT, conceived within triadic form and articulated via structuralist theory (sec. I.) combined with my critical method to show the possibilities of criticism keen to test the shift between traditional methods and

phenomenological criticism. Not dissimilar to actor-network theory, it witnesses the recruitment and conversion of items and events as a means to build an assemblage. Things are held in place by the conceptual form in this third section and I challenge the reader to make the final link between interchangeable sub-sections at the very end (sec. III.C. onwards), to become part of "the making of connections, with the linking of one thing with another in order to apprehend the greater whole" (Burnside Reckoning 15). The promotion of the in-between state and the stilling of the 'conversion' process that I attempt to bring into relief evokes TLT's final poem, where non-constituted fragmentation promotes the poem wandering errantly from poetic presence but made free within a dynamic array of reference and signification. It is a site that the poet forwards for the reader to dwell in poetically; the relinquishing of his own craft brings forward a method that does not read thingness as an "effect of *recognitions* and uses performed within *frames* of understanding" (Frow "A Pebble" 279; my emphasis) but promotes world within modalities of *acknowledgement* and within *spheres* or realms of being attuned. It is comportment poetics of the surround or 'engirdlement' -- an apparent outward spatial limit of earth, stressing commonality (concentricism) over enframing (limitation). It is a new possibility of the poetic cast of mind.

### III.A. The Phenomenological Contract

The phenomenological 'I' takes the mental act as its datum. While the lyrical device in Burnside is not the symbolic psychology of introspection, how does it advance beyond the first-person case to the life-world, and while not taking the source of consciousness within this datum how does this evoke self-consciousness?

Phenomenology has posited a distinction between the material

object and the intentional object of a mental state. Stevens proposes that things are without human feeling and without human meaning. That things merely are, is an inscrutable paradox stating both that things are beyond our imaginings but also that without the imagination no things *can be* i.e. it is in the imagination, our relationship to things, that we let things be or not. Here, distinction or separation is always a relation. Thus, the Stevensian imperative is to allow this relation its true and full fruition: "Let be be finale of seem". ("The Emperor of Ice Cream" 7 Collected). I read Burnside accepting this position by forwarding *thinking* in TLT not to state that 'seeming' cannot be reconciled to that which 'is', but that the 'I' is knowingly interdependently exchanging with the physical ecology. Burnside thus embraces elements of the phenomenological -- especially the possibilities of the 'I' as non-essentialist being located in only one place at one time -- but *contextualizes his poetics* to promote existence in relation to essences, the resultant materialist poems therefore vibrate with historical and collective dimensions. Here, an incredible amount of pressure is placed upon the deployment and function of intertext to evoke the ontological.

When they speak about angels in books,  
I think what they mean is this sudden

arrival at somewhere else  
through a rift in the fabric,

this glimpse of the absence that forms between two lives ("After  
Lucretius" 1: 25-30)

Burnside's self-indulgent recontextualizing of lines from "September Evening; Deer at Big Basin" (MOT 1-3) ("After Lucretius" 1:25-26/27) instances the mind's capacity for care (Heideggerian sorge), the positing of world in a frame alive to the past and yet unintentional, "unanchored, blind" (1: 12). It is, however, the universal

intentionality (to relate) threaded with anxiety from the ultimate fact of our disconnection from world as time progresses -- both child to man and century to century. The intertextual lines are therefore, indicative of human "apprehension for itself and for others, and the attempt to understand the world as an object of knowledge and activity" (Scruton 273).

Moreover, the emphasis on being active in time forms and determines an outlook beyond the objective world or world of essences: "something will come from nowhere / and touch a man" (Burnside "After Lucretius" 1: 39-40). Not wanting to transcend world, Burnside's evokes the invisible flesh of world as something that provides a felt relation. The source of consciousness does not appear to consciousness, thus phenomenology cannot postulate the transcendental ego, it can only posit consciousness as phenomenological nothingness (something that Burnside continually presents as "nothing"). Here "something" and "nowhere" phenomenologically denote the transcendental ego, which is transcendental to the phenomenology. It is at times, therefore, a limited linguistic realism, but it evokes intuition and emotion implicitly.

### III.B. Phenomenology Versus a Contracted Sense of Realism

TLT uses the first person pronoun less than any other collection, which suggests that the need to install the Cartesian ground to phenomenological foundationalism is not a requirement. Thus the indicative sense of the singular form does not report the contents of that foundation, but the stress on the 'I' in TLT -- always following the plural 'we', or framed by the 'we' -- proposes a different

foundation in the subjective case.<sup>72</sup> As a replacement for a noun the pronoun shifts naming into relation, designating *designation and summoning* rather than fixing things in place. In Burnside it is what is given to consciousness in the very act of conceiving itself as a related entity which is *the experience of integration that precedes every attempt at description*.

I used to think old age would be like this:  
the afternoons more sudden than they are  
in childhood ("The Gravity Chair" 1-3)

An indelicate, forced manipulation of the reader echoes Stevens' position that the imaginatively transformed reality of poetry "is both preferable to an inhuman, contracted and oppressive sense of reality" while also offering "a truer picture of the relations humans entertain with the world" (Critchley 28). I suggest that the effects in TLT require slow contemplation of the situated consciousness. I shall expand.

### III.B.1. I/We and the World Paradigm of Situated Consciousness

Wittgenstein's private language argument proposes immediacy or privilege involved in knowledge of personal experiences where meaning is woven into the fabric of each individual's life (Investigations). Burnside's use of the plural pronoun suggests a publicly accessible condition with the contours of intimacy resting in-between the direct

---

<sup>72</sup> Speaking generally of the three sections: (i) 'Habitat': emphasizes the singular pronoun being either framed by the plural pronoun or being setup as a means to address another individual subject; (ii) 'Phusis': the 'I' (with one exception, "The Gravity Chair") is embedded in discourse with 'you' as second person pronoun indicating Sarah Burnside, as collective pronoun synonymous to 'one' (not individuation), and as relative link to other, most notably the most pronounced pronoun, the third person 'he', Burnside's son; (iii) 'World': both aspects of the former sections brings the three into relation (with the singular exception of "Birth Songs") and uses these to promote place, 'here' is called to attention and discovered through these pronouns.



observation of a singular mental state on one hand, and the indirect observation of an other on the other hand (as with the section "Habitat" where the 'I' is framed by 'we'). It expands how things seem to how they are and how they are shared. It pushes outward from pure phenomenology (and the Husserlian epoché) to suggest not only the possibility of thicker experience than the 'I' alone affords, but also the conviction of the existence of other minds, and an emphasis on shared experience where the world is seen under the aspect of meaning to communities and the forms of integrated experience. This contextualizing of the phenomenological (to the degree that this is possible via frames) can return the self to an enriched and completed form, what Burnside has labelled "Pleroma" (FD).

I have identified four moments in TLT that forward the 'I' more than its relational family as posited in all other poems. I wish to look briefly at three of these here to loosely encompass themes and treatment in a manner that a phenomenological criticism might operate. I see this necessarily tasked with accentuating the qualitative aspects that are spatially and temporally distributed through the collection which require a flitting and quick mind. They are thus difficult to individuate and draw together with one thread; a temporary excuse for dextrous prose across the poems, I propose.

The first two of these pronominal examples recall the poem's persona in childhood and are embedded in the concept of gravity. It is a force that reveals itself in "The Gravity Chair" and is viewed within the wake of the philosophical paradox of Zeno of Elea and the argument against motion, plurality and change. In "Birth Songs" it is inseparable from Lucretius' materialistic view of the nature of the universe where all things pass and change from one state to another. The paradox of this combination is resolved through Burnside outrunning these theories in his offering of unity (the first poem dedicated to his wife) and mystery (the behaviour of world

beyond the phenomenological frame) within a single semantic site:

I used to think old age would be like this:  
the afternoons more sudden than they are  
in childhood...

yet sometimes, on a winter's afternoon,  
I thought of someone skilled - a juggler, say -  
adapting to the pull of gravity

by shifts and starts, till something in the flesh  
- a weightedness, a plumb-line to the earth -  
revealed itself, consenting to be still. ("The Gravity Chair" 1-3, 10-15)

The metaphysician reads "still" referring to the promotion of now: "the time it is inside the soul" (Priest 226, 237); the philosopher reads this as method where things are "temporaliz[ed]" (Deleuze Bergonism 35) and given *relations in duration*. Why the need for "weightedness" one asks? The condition of being something forwarded by the participial adjective brings forth the sense of gravity as our comportment to world; here the effect is to provide the sense of falling into death as part of the chord of the earth's movements. This is highlighted by the frame of the poem that I have collapsed here, but it is wrapped within a thesis of adjustments as *singular existence* in the middle triplet's articulation of change and oneness; motion, therefore can be conceived as stillness, temporality as infinite.

This single movement is given further stress in the next poem that centres the 'I' more than other poems in TLT, but this, as with "The Gravity Chair", is hardly singular centring at all. Nature is threaded in paths and journeys of world in "Birth Songs"; it just cannot be conceived separately in the poem full of world. The philosophical take is that of their being no rawness in world. Whether Burnside's poetry shows an inconsistency with respect to the degree that this position can be extended into the notion of 'ready-to-hand' (Heidegger), throwness and being 'always-already' situated

in time, and the quasi-Kantian argument that thought operates within perception, requires further investigation and may not be resolved by critical accounts of his poetry. However, in TLT we can claim that Burnside offers the poetics of being neither alone nor out of process.<sup>73</sup>

I wonder what you dream  
and whether dreams  
are possible: what clouds of glory fade  
to sunlight, daybreak,  
hints of gorse and tar. ("Birth Songs" 1: 8-12)

The mysterious world is soaked in the wired and connected realm of the parent's intuition and love (1-4). Is this a case of human behaviour viewed differently to nature; are reasons and decisions forwarded over causes and predictions? The most telling aspect is the imagined child's mind conceived through the man's lexis of nature. The shift from monochrome to gold widens a sense of binary between father and son, imagined and real, dark and light, human and nature. The latter colour of gorse is not alone but collocated to the liquid of bituminous odour obtained by destruction of wood or coal, signifying the free and the organic made into technology as a qualification to potential sentimentality. An environmentally acute fusion of the world and of human geography (tar) is also an ironic premise of the movement of mind upon surfaces to satisfy its need to conquer surfaces. Is this heavy-handed treatment of the phenomenological? By comparison, the loose navigation of "On Kvaløya" uncertainty and naming are considered once more within the quest and in comparison to stillness, but I'd like to think a little

---

<sup>73</sup> Foucault names the institutionalized discipline of the body and the regulation of population biopolitics as 'biopower', which suggests to Agamben the politicization of bare life. Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality (1979), and Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life (1998).

more on "Birth Songs" first.

I saw how lovingly the earth resumes  
possession, like a blizzard in reverse,  
retaining every blemish, every scratch

and fingerprint, a history of touch  
and currency...

as it became

the echo of my ordinary self  
sounded-out and guessed-at in a chill  
descent (V: 3-7, 11-14)

Poignant line-endings in these triplets, especially at "resumes" and "chill" suggest terminus and continuation in a fall from human ownership, complemented by the hyphenated and half-rhyme of past-tense actions -- familiar ground to the advanced reader but a confusing array to the general reader unaware that the poet is writing out a "history" of his experience of "another presence" (17) folded within world, "like a descant, or a pulse" (18). The quest and comportment beyond our contingent selves but one aware of self being embedded within this wider realm recalls MOT and it harnesses phenomenology to mark out consciousness in its wake: we pick at the scars and its footprint. "On Kvaloya" restates this in more expedient poetics:

I will have named

all we can see, from here to the snow on Kvannfjellet,  
the yarrow in the grass, a passing swan,  
eider and black-backed gull at the rim of the sound.

I gloss uncertainties - this lime-green weed  
that fetches up a yard above the tide;  
those seabirds in the channel, too far out  
to call for sure (3-10)

The arc of mind from vision to the world concealed by nature ("snow"), and the herbs of white and yellow within the green, and the three species of birds that live at the edge of the horizon are enfolded into metre to stress parallels. The end of speech and the

channel of water ("at the rim | of the sound") are wrapped into three-syllable feet to elasticize their sense of connection. A loose container for father and son, and the sense of the foreign and the domestic in the poem ("similar enough, / though different, to those we know at home") are brought into singular music of delicate quietness. I have already shown how this is significantly underlined by Burnside's appropriation of Benjamin's model of translation and I claim this phenomenological patch in each poem as being free yet also triggered by the 'I' at the beginning of the lines and dispersed in various temporal states: poetry created by operating outside the tiny, fractured phenomenological moment.

I have taken these examples to indicate that Burnside's use of the pronoun in TLT is significant in that even in its most singular moments it is infused in the world around. Looking at these moments out of context of the collection has suggested the need to consider poetic devices and treatment on a larger scale. I have suggested, too, the ways in which Burnside posits the mind, and I now wish to consider the decreative stance as an interface to these issues.

### III.C. Post-Weilean Poetics: Care as Comportment

As identified above, the marrying of perception and world in this poetic, while troubled by human and technological frameworks locates a conception of livelihood as begreifen. This is a mode of conceiving that works beyond representational thinking but also acts as the (less restrictive) representational comprehension of world in the immediateness of the living encounter (Heidegger Being). Thus conceived through my phenomenological analysis, the Burnsidean epiphanical moment is one of arrest built from stillness and movement combined; in its most serene manifestation it assume the tone, though not the doctrinal implication, of a prayer.

The post-theological equilibrium of science and philosophy positions Jori Graham as one of this century's finest poets of phenomenology and metaphysics. "The Visible World" reads phenomena as "upthrown" (9, 40) from "the absolute" (1), deranged / and rippling" (10-11). I have stated that Burnside and Oliver proffer the overlapping of instances carried and cradled by the non-contingent soul, what Thomas has rightly understood as "an awareness of a universe only briefly troubled by human presence", as with my reading of "Koi". For Graham, the challenge is to bring and make this "pellucid moment - here on this page now / as on this patch / of soil, my property". As with Williams' treatise of ownership through disowning (ch. 3), Graham attempts to disentagle things yet retain supernatural dynamism in abstractions that are beyond the human frame and at the edge of poetics. I choose to read Burnside's concept of begrieffen as grundstimmung, and thus emphasize history. I forward this alongside a reading of Weilian poetics to imitate the collection's simultaneous epistemology. Thus, two subsections (III.C.1.a. and III.C.2.a) are interchangeable qualifications to the 'other' parent section ('Decreation' and 'History') and can be read in one move as presented here or in two moves by swapping their order to widen each aspect of decreation and history, respectively. This stylistic element is an avoidance of certainty but is primarily an affordance for the reader to bring into conception that which presents itself.

### III.C.1. Creation as Decreation

Weil: "We must take the feeling of being at home into exile. We must be rooted in the absence of a place" (34). Chance, necessity, and evil have their place in Weil's thought, which contemplates the world not as a debased creation but an expression of the love of the

Demiurge with which the human co-creates. This creation is the act of decreation i.e. to pierce the screen of necessity between human and divine realms as a means to human ceasing. Stevens sees a direct relation between this and the role of the artist.

Decreation: to make something created pass into the uncreated.  
 Destruction: to make something created pass into nothingness. A blameworthy substitute for decreation (Weil 28; cited Stevens Necessary).

This opening statement appears to make the distinction between the 'uncreated' and 'nothingness', which suggests the potential and the rebirth of energy over the destroyed and destitute. When read in the context of Weil's thesis, "decreation" lying between sections entitled "The Self" and "Self-Effacement", is not simply the renunciation of self, but as indicated in the final lines of the middle essay, it is the loss of being "'myself'" or "'ourselves'" which finds home in exile (Weil 34), resonating with Burnsidean dispossession.

I have spoken of contextualized phenomenology as history. I read Burnsidean negative poetics of naming turn towards immediacy and presence of earth (ekstasis) while the notion of repetition or the act of the human in response to world presents homology between mind and world. This, as Harrison has found, comes from the view of possibility afforded by decreation: the new vision that understands the sin of denomination as possession ("Not Ideas" 662), that which charges abstraction with the need to "draw away", abstrahere (663), i.e. loosen the phenomenon from the compounds of fiction while allowing fiction to take ownership or dispossess the human. In American poetry it has been expressed as the spirit that passes and continues, celebrated as the lack of harbour in Whitman's "Song of Myself" (1892): "without check with original energy" (Song 1: 13)

that is "not demented with the mania of owning things" (32: 6) and has bequeathed the self-will to "scattering" (14: 19). I read its forbear in British Romanticism from an emphasis upon stillness that suggests attunement to world and to time, and I suggest it is coming to light once more in the post-Stevensian poetic. I have prefigured this in terms of the techniques and themes of loosening and binding.

In Weil, "the Self" posits that the 'I' is the only possession that we have, which can be destroyed *from within* as an offering and vehicle to the divine; this is the ceaseless renewal of being (27) recalling an Augustinian consent to unification. "Self-Effacement" promotes humility and withdrawal that allows the light that is the union of God and earth (36). Stevens has understood this in terms of artistry and reckoning that comes with post-human grace in relinquishing power of the single identity. His text, "The Relations Between Poetry and Painting", 1951, a Museum of Modern Art of New York pamphlet, mobilizes Weil's conception of decreation as co-creation (29). Predating T.S. Eliot's introduction to Weil in 1952 following Routledge and Kegan Paul's publication of The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind in 1949, Stevens stresses that possession via renouncing betokens not an identity as creator but one as spirit ("The Noble Rider and The Sound of Words" Necessary 33). This is what Burnside attempts to trap or channel in this collection. Unlike Weil's extension into the passive acceptance of misery (Weil 30-31), to become "nothing" i.e. eternal (32), for Burnside it is to enter deeper into history and on into the nameless. This can be read as further isolationism into the phenomenological realm as residence, but it should be read as intentional dwelling in thinking involved in action in the world.

In the language of American deconstruction, decreeted nothingness presences the invisible continuum and potential of earth. This version of Heideggerian "sparing" to leave and let things dwell



(Question 308) is known to the unsympathetic modern reader as mystical, speculative imprecision. To the phenomenologist it is the potential in world, often signified by 'nothing' the nominative act that cannot report the source of its consciousness. For Burnside, it acknowledges that the human is not debarred from the scene:

how every small erasure  
 in the snow  
 was dreamed to life  
 as something you could hear:  
 a thin song in the walls; a narrow purl  
 of infant longing  
 built into the stair. ("Animism" 15-21)

Each erasure (not deletion) affords newness, separations posed as links. There is an incredible weight placed upon the first foot of the last line here ("built"): a punchy monosyllable of human ecology which designates fiction and the power of metaphor. Moreover, the complex "You" operating simultaneously/ambiguously as indicative second person pronoun and self-reflective, objective 'I', could be coined as 'ego-free decrelated self-hood' but it has come from something *made*. Here, the bridge between perception and memory modernizes Stevens' appropriation of Weil further to interface empirical mind and imaginative flight. I expand.

"Purl" is the (textual) manifestation of thread and whirling movement of the imagination hardwired into the architectonics of home and body; the vehicle between planes (stair) is bridge and sanctuary, not means to elevation. However, the "erasure" and "snow" betokening emptiness that could fuel negative "longing" is foremost the capacity to outlive impotent stillness and to resourcefully co-create within confined spaces and limited agency. This is the Weilean 'I' dissolving into the nameless; it is the moment that disputes detachment where "at last we shall rush rapidly past objectiveness" (Graham "The Visible World" 88, Materialism in The Dream of the

Unified Field, 1996).<sup>74</sup> It is a readable extension of the druidic ritual that "Animism" developed in the second stanza from the opening image of a bible "like a newly-gutted fish, / open forever / at Leviticus" (Burnside 5-7). The final push (above) retains the move to conceive the third book of the Pentateuch not in terms of sanitary cleanliness but as the law of involvement -- another emphasis of rite over right debarred by unpoetic impasse. Desire thus infuses the fish image (one of slaughter and offering) and enables it to run into the animism of names, which in the third stanza's "narrow purl" negates confinement in law while suggesting possibility and plurality. The verb as noun signifies both the song of rivulet and the East Anglian name for the tern, giving presence to the creatures over the scripture, building a sense of the hidden, local, contingent and empirical within the universal unfolding of the woven and fluid world. It is a complex vacancy operating within the shift from the noun to verb. To speak of its intrinsic quality would be to suggest that this is local history dependent upon the human for singing, or it is the poetic site of world and flight as human locus.

### III.C.1.a. History (the Lament as Base)

Burnside's Orphic allusions in TLT are to Rilke: to sing into existence not to name, codify or reflectively map.

Then Adam forgot the names and one by one  
the creatures died.

He seemed heroic then, a breed apart,  
and how he loved them more for being lost

became his only myth, a tale he told  
of golden frogs and blood-red simians.

---

<sup>74</sup> Graham's line taken from Mikhail Vasilievich Matyushin follows direct citations of the Bergson influenced manifesto "Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto", Umberto Boccioni et al. See Perloff Futurist.

Sometimes he wondered if they died en masse  
 or if a single female had remained  
 for months in the forest,  
 lamenting the loss of her kind.

And this was how he knew himself at last,  
 the unvoiced presence shining in his eyes

made flesh again, made whole, untouched by god  
 and homesick for the other animals. ("History" (1)).

Loss is the point of relationship and is the vehicle to finding oneself. This has a particularly timbre in the poem's endnote: "*Miss Waldron's Red colobus, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2000.*" Burnside references the old world primate, Piliocolobus badius waldronae, the critically endangered species of monkey discovered in 1933 and the first primate declared extinct in the twenty-first century, reported extinct by the Associated Press in September 2000 having not been sighted since 1978.<sup>75</sup> Burnside's polemic can be heard in the line-endings "one", "apart", and "lost" that betoken the untimely meditation that "at last" signifies man's destruction and irreversible alienation. It appears that Stevens' textual reconciliation has diminished. The loss of animal ancestry and global biodiversity is Burnside's challenge to thinking that views history as linear. This is indicated by his use of Shepard who reads the central theme of linear history as "the rejection of habitat" (Nature 43), that New Testament "antiorganic and antisensuous masterpiece in abstract thinking" ("Puritans" Nature 5) -- to Burnside this indicates a requirement to rethink the condition of homesickness: to sense familiarity in the word oikos is to know it is a state of mind available in many places when one becomes unfixed. This premise is echoed when mind is recalibrated to dispersion, thus reshuffled "apart" and "lost" lead

---

<sup>75</sup> 11,046 species were listed as threatened in "The International Union for Conservation and Natural Resources (IUCN) 2000" report; this rose to 16,118 in 2006. IUCN, 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://www.iucnredlist.org/info/tables/table1>>. The extinction of Red Colobus is contested by W. Scott McGraw.

to "one".

### III.C.2. History

Heidegger's late metaphysics proposes responsible action as ver-an-gassen (Question 9), which is to let loose and to start something on its way. While it resonates well with Burnside's deployment of Moore in TAD, it also suggests an occasion of freedom into presencing. In terms of framing history, the challenge is positive destining, unlocking the energies of nature from the standing reserve (25).<sup>76</sup> It promotes poetic vision as ordaining, giving the world Romantic dispensation that allows an insight to the "yet veiled" as "waiting" ("The Turning", Question 37): this is what Heidegger means by 'stillness': endurance and unfulfilled potential. It is also a new provision of history:

We locate history in the realm of happening, instead of thinking history in accordance with its essential origin from out of destining (Question 38).

Here, destining signifies the will, the "turning" within Being, Heidegger proposes, that can be realized through self-clearing (Question 41) -- a synonym for Weilean erasure.

Burnside first writes of this in terms of a human response that promotes the context of human history within the earth's evolution. It manifested into a monument poem regarding our relationship to creatures in "History" (1) and developed into a critique of middle-eastern foreign policy in the uncollected poem "Base" with a middle ground of ethics and responsibility in "History" (2):

but this is the problem: how to be alive  
in all this gazed-upon and cherished world

---

<sup>76</sup> See Nietzsche's third meditation (Untimely).

and do no harm

                  a toddler on a beach  
sifting wood and dried weed from the sand  
and puzzled by the pattern on a shell

his parents on the dune slacks with a kite  
plugged into the sky  
                  all nerve and line

patient; afraid; but still, through everything  
attentive to the irredeemable. ("History" (2) 63-73)

World-fear meets beach debris as the poet walks along the coastline at St Andrews with his wife and first son; it is a vision of the unit of three isolated yet "plugged" into a global context of letting be and universal authoritative response.<sup>77</sup> The child, Lucas, echoes with the air-base Leuchars and expands the process of naming as enframing into the geo-political scale.<sup>78</sup> Burnside starts with the "war planes" (10) over the golf course but allows them to fade out into "petrol blue" (35) and then focus on the kite; the dissolve to a colour suggestive of the imagination scaffolds the displacement of image by the kite as a symbol of communal interface across the three humans and between sky and earth. This transition forwards the need to find context by thinking of "neither kinship nor our given states" (24) but our confinement "by property" (30). The word resonates between the sense of intrinsic aspect and ownership. The poet suggests it "has most to do with distance and the shapes / we find in water" (32-33), the homes of colour, light, oceanic patterns, and pollution that provide an affordance for life. Relating this to fish trapped in ornamental ponds and the figure of his son on the beach brings the poet to the final lines of horror and the potential godless disorganization.

I am reading this poem as a metaphor of craftwork, an instance of

---

<sup>77</sup> See sec. II., pp. 284-286.

<sup>78</sup> cf. "Of Gravity and Light" and "Birth Songs" (TLT), "De Anima" (TGN), and "Responses to Augustine of Hippo" (GS).

human action. Here the Romantic paradox outlined by Bate, to embrace sanctity of life without enframing it ("Eco laurels"), is a lens upon the landscape that provides the pictorial frame for the child navigating the terrain of the sea's "driftwork" (20) and the locus of the parents' stasis. This is modelled as a stillness that is an indecision, "plugged" into earth's elements, inactive but desperate for a composed response to the inescapable challenge to throw this child forth into the world. Equally, "patient" and "afraid", this balance of calm and fear is threaded as being "still" and is in "everything". Nevertheless, it is primarily "nerve and line": taut "lines raised in the wind" (28). Like the casting of poetic words out into the world, the fundamentally longitudinal connection between father and son (watermarked by universalism) is viewed as connection between earth and sky through *playing* and the desire to resist the gravity of the occasion, although knowledgeable of the fact that any spontaneity is lost in the reflective moment and the ethical stance. This knowledge is neighboured by paranoia. Having traded so much for the virtual and having lost the other animals, the potential atonement for setting warplanes in the sky seems unlikely. The poem is absent of resolution. It forwards no manifesto but evokes *enowning*; an idea incredibly difficult to fit into English but connoted in the phrase "being-historical thinking" i.e. thinking that is governed by the historical unfolding of world/Being, viewed as leaping into truth or movement in the sway of the historical epoch of involvements guided by Being.<sup>79</sup> I have read this poem in the wake of my emphasis on binding (gravity) and loosening (light); unfinishing and irresolvability in "History" (2) are revised in the final poem.

---

<sup>79</sup> Also Heidegger, Contributions to Philosophy (from Enowning), (1999).

III.C.2.a. Decreation

I remind readers of my statements on the breakdown of language as a means to uncreate self and to open up world (ch. 1). Here, the unpoetic space is an unfinished semantic site where the work not the form of poetry comes into play; a site, Simic argues, that is best suited to prose ("The Spirit of Play" 29). Brief disturbances of space with each sound enable the surrounding blank space to transform noun into question, without providing an answer. It is a willed move to emptiness teasing with spiritual nostalgia confused with mental vacancy. It is most centrally where the ordinariness of language admits the potential for revelation. I urge the reader to recall the Coleridgean poetic of silence as absence identified by Larkin as "an inflection of how others are present as one way of opening to an other" (115). In its modern form in the Weilean poetic, this urges the reader "to read the poem back from its fragmentary status" (Baker 139), rather than reading the lines driving sense home.

"A Theory of Everything"

Until it deals with gravity and light  
and how they loose and bind  
all the ten thousand things

I'll settle for that reach of sunlit track  
that led out to the sea

at Mirtiotissa:

the sound of water rushing through the pines  
towards us                      and a scent

unfolding from the earth, to draw us in

-- a history of light  
and gravity                      -- no more -

for this is how the world  
occurs: not piecemeal  
   but entire

and instantaneous  
the way we happen:

woman

blackbird

man

I choose this poem for its location in this collection and as a final example of the phenomenological stance overriding poetic music. This choice elevates the dual action of gravity and light as "loose[ning] and bind[ing]", setting free and gathering where one can "settle" in the site of movement in time (the "reach"). The poem is metaphor for an invocation of the imagination enfolding world inspirationally as an essence of world. Heidegger speaks of things flashing (blitzen), as an entrance "into its own emitting of light" (Question 45).

To Rilke this is reflected in the proper invisibility of world within human fleeting i.e. internalization where truth is one long internal season to the inner ear. In this poem Burnside attempts the extensive time of the tenth elegy considered as "place and settlement, foundation and soil and home" (15). The fourth and seventh lines echoed in "woman blackbird man" (17) suggests a form of disclosure where man, as much as his human other and creaturely other, is gazed upon and gathered in nearness. The blackbird -- as trans migratory symbol of mourning that evolves into an Orphic messenger of relation and mutual belonging -- is one that postulates the unity of the 'I' rather than posits it as fixed grounding. The effect is that the poem echoes the traces of prosperity from primal grief in Rilke's principality of lament in the ninth -- the 'protocosmic' thinking in daily relationships afforded by the witness to the naming of constellations. As individual units spaced into singularity and emphasized by poetic breath, Burnside's words flash outside of technological reckoning i.e. morphological, psychological, and the terms of decline, loss, fate, catastrophe, and destruction (Heidegger Question 48). This song of the constellation of being is not a human utterance but suggestive "stillness": the worlding of elements together into a gathering impregnated with potential and disclosure (49). Here, the shallow artwork speaks of the occluded void as "the attempt to rebuild the shattered community of we"



(Graham "The Art of Poetry" 57). Rather than mourning that considers death as terminus, Burnside's bird recalls the "birdvoice of the deathlike one", the soul not destined to death but "going under" into the realm of vespers, ghostliness, and the land of traces (Heidegger Language 197): it should be read as instigating a world of the third person in its presencing and occasional flight.

Things that can gather "come to unite within the same" where they are "at rest within themselves" ("What Are Poets For?" Poetry 100). The poetic setting allows comparison of different things not to divorce into singularity, but giving the relation the same for each: to bring together earth (the gathering site) and human in earth (the song that names into existence and memory); as such, it is the vantage point of the total, historical process of nature.

In the final analysis, a vacant modality is urged by the poem as primary ontology and means to secure the phenomenological experience as reference point to measure and map the self in relation to the unnamed fabric. The presence of the 'I' is secured within this negative space of the reflexive pronoun "I'll" indicating stance and futurity in one. This is neither signification that indicates absence more than presence within the positing of sign, nor is it a transparent eyeball that alleviates language as mediator. It is an involved and dispersed self across media and time. It is what Poirier has noted as "compensatory emphasis" of the transitive, leading to substance (Poetry 136). The fluxional emphasis within Burnside's abstract vitality of qualia -- the way and how the world occurs -- reinstates the contradictory refraction and blurring of the linguistic while most attentive and empirically grounded.

### III.C.3. Conclusions

Hannah Arendt speaks from an understanding of Benjamin's poetic thought that conveys the spirit and its material manifestation as intimately connected. Burnside borrows from Arendt to explicate his Stevens (Men in Dark Times, Stevens Selected). The correspondence between the opposed concepts is paradigmatic of the metaphor for Arendt, which establishes a connection in immediacy that requires no interpretation: a material form given over to the invisible as linguistic transference that renders "it capable of being experienced" (Arendt 166). The metaphysical acoustic space of language, therefore, is seen as part of the world essence (204-205), consonant with my Heideggerian explication of poetic language as an event (ch. 1). This via Benjamin to Arendt, resituates our view on Burnside's Stevens as poet of "intentionless" utterances of world essence. Having posited eco-phenomenological poetics as intentional i.e. explicitly foregrounding mental state although often lowering the Kantian coordinative centre, the relinquished authority provides a particular ethical stance in the making/creating/writing process:

Not to investigate the utilitarian or communicative faculties of linguistic creations, but to understand them in their crystallized and thus fragmentary forms (Arendt 205).

Arendt's concern for reading human experience with the "universe in its totality" is to convey not to explain "the experience of action" (Hammer 143), and I see this as a relevant context for approaching TLT's final poem and the collection in totality. Arendt's concern understands humans as phenomenal beings who can regain a sense of play in and of the world outwith the modern life processes of production and consumption; it stresses that political thinking can come from the sensually perceived world, a site for Arendt where a corresponding "desire to care for and preserve the things of the

world" is to "instil a feel for what it means to cultivate the world" (144). The larger emphasis in Burnside is to show his process of cultivation and to see these as natural changes developed by the human, especially heightened in his handling of phenomenology.

In the final analysis, this last poem suggests certainty and spontaneity but primarily a disinterest where poet's cultivation of nature extends to cultivation of spirit: the array of bird, woman, man, is an energia or actuality without goal and leaves no trace, a history that is regained in the activity of thinking. The deployment of "I'll" uncovers the subjunctive mood emoting possibility, necessity and judgement. "I'll settle" is a form of action or willed dwelling: the noethic act where the act of consciousness (noéisis) is driven by the content of consciousness (noéma). But it is also a promotion of the phenomenological reduction of Husserl, the world as object of consciousness. A final glance reads the third movement of the poem (12-17) as post-Husserlian being-in-the-world, the array of woman, blackbird, man for the 'I' and its thinking. Therefore, it indicates both the provisional and the whole for it is tied to the noun/verb "settle" with an emphasis on comportment "for". This transitive sense operates throughout the poem and finds an "incremental process in which we are always beginning" (Hammer 130). Here fragments of the past, elements and a path (the array, and the "reach" driven out of memory and back into world action, stance) constitute grounds for the poet to re-enact founding. Given over to the context of consciousness and the intentional stance this poem suggests that the Platonic separation of knowing and doing is negotiated by not offering the violence of origins but the ability to engineer the mind and construct an ethical comportment where the notion of founding falls to the sense of beginning, one that is a continuation of history.

The final lines to this collection suggest referentiality over originary experience. It is the casting of words for the light to catch rather than as names to trap.

Light in TLT, I argue, extends the German Idealist shift from interpretation of spiritual truth to the understanding of human action by promoting the way that meaning is communicated. While Stevens has argued that "what we said of it became / A part of what it is... ("A Postcard from the Volcano" 15-16 Collected), Scigaj has restated the theory of poetry within the sense that ecopoetics requires, the larger sense of recreation. Scigaj's reading of A.R. Ammons:

[an] outward movement from alienation and loneliness toward a more comfortable acceptance and celebration of the natural world parallels a deepening understanding of how the creative act of perception and its recreation in language is homologous to the operations of the energy-driven ecosystems of our planet (85).

This complements Voros on process in Stevens (p. 34). Man as one occurrence of physis alongside that of the plants and animals is the accomplishment of inaction that enables beings to exist in the "nameless" ("The Origin of the Work of Art", Basic 199). Although alone in his language world (205-206), by not determining how things appear (210), thinking can turn to the "recollection of [the] history that [primordially] unfolds itself" (211). While Heidegger states that a dialogue with materialism is required before the holy region avails itself to thinking, Burnside enters the Surrealist provision of world. Through Stevens and the influence of Simone Weil, he opens this into Eastern practice of meditation of proximity and involvement.<sup>80</sup> Settlement upon the provisional in this manner

---

<sup>80</sup> Burnside has indicated that this is driven by the Tao Te Ching, the "one significant factor in how [he] approach[es his] work"

suggests what Priest conceives as soul "what the unity of my consciousness consists in" (233), nature of experienced space thoroughly within things (234-35). The poem, therefore, is a version of the temporal comportment of phenomenological intentionality (verhalten): capability embedded in living nature that holds us captive in our specific way and prior to subjective perspectivism.

The last movement of the collection, as a model of parataxis shifting into an emphasis on prepositions without indication of relation is one that undermines poetic expectation and desire. One wonders why this non-artistry is present at the culmination of such a conceptually wrought volume until one encounters the lack of period as a final grammatical relinquishment disordering Stevens' line and promoting an "entirely provisional, achievement of order" (Burnside in Stevens Selected ix). This is openness in the shift from 'nature' to 'life in the world', to view the process in which we can join offering the life of things not the agency of objects. Furthermore, it appears to offer another version of the fact that "being there together is enough" (Stevens "Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour" Collected 18). As with a grammarless and silent exit exhibited by the fragment par excellence and by evasion of simile, the trinity here crystallizes the presence of nature beside the intellect, the names as momentary passing and stillness that have come before and will return again. These are events of poetic naming, not of a thing as being, but things in being (Heidegger Language 63), the operation of a single neighbourhood and inter-subjective site or (non-)musical decreed structural harmony. Invisible and only available within the phenomenological domain unable to postulate its origin but always already thrown to a new

---

("Presiding Spirits" 12).

world where the ecological context transforms the ineffable into a material realm. One can only turn to philosophical language in order to express a sense of enchainment, that is presence-absence underwritten by the unexpected and yet known, these are metaphors for a disclosed and fragile weakness that undermines the notion of power in order to represent the earthly and air-borne, the (un)sung and tangible.

## Afterword

I. Closing Remarks

The closing emphasis on freedom and departure in TAD is coupled to the availing freedom that terminates TLT. Seen in unity they suggest movement as the source of life; as pre-figurations of TGN, they foresee that nature is no simple sanctuary:

They should have guessed  
 how earnestly the land conducts itself  
 and how it longs for stories to contain:  
 households and fiefdoms laid down in the dirt,  
 the thumbprint on a harness or a knife,  
 a cotton doll, a candy-coloured skirt,  
 gas-stoves and ledgers falling through the earth  
 as softly as a snowflake falls through light. ("Steinar Undir  
 Steinahlithum" 9-16)

Burnside's collaboration with his contemporary, R.M.M. Crawford, the anthropologist and plant scientist of St Andrews, contemplates abandoned farms in Southeast Iceland as the symbolic frontier that is the history of buried landscapes, human settlements, and agriculture, in northern oceanic climates ("Science"; TGN). The poem resists the polemic of settlement and negates territorial conceptions of belonging. Its ground zero is the acknowledgement of the need for human and nature to evolve together within a consideration of human adaptability as a specialism in movement i.e. that belonging in particular habitats to which things are specially adapted can be viewed as the first step on the road to extinction. This stoical escape from anthropocentrism also suggests the temporality of "stories to contain" world; that passing narratives as a formation within a continuum parallel Heideggerian presencing that allows things their 'thingness' without capture and exploitation. The post-Romantic principle that things without principle are the only true life, to Burnside, relates to the problem of the will (domination,

technology, epistemological frameworks) and the tendency to secure. When this is considered via transmutation of both destiny and responsibility, and within the relinquishing of goals and overseeing things that may promote anarchy, one must note that it is the self-regulation of economies and ecologies that is being suggested by his ethos. To read a fall "through light" that is self-extradition to the historical is to view this alive and in terms of involvement; it is an emphasis on separation as link, too (largely complementing Weil's effacement into the nameless and Steven's practice to elaborate and rework an oeuvre). Harrison, through the territory of New England scholarship reminds us that "to dwell" is to "go astray":

The substantive disagreement with Heidegger, shared by Emerson and Thoreau, is that the achievement of the human requires not inhabitation and settlement but abandonment (Cavell 138; cited Harrison 265).

As one may read in the closure to TAD, in leaving is the discovery that something has been settled: this something is the abandonment of self to world, the enthusiasm of Thoreauvian living deliberately, which as "craving for reality" (Harrison 222) is a move towards flux, contingency, and estrangement. Burnside, we conclude, draws no such disagreement.

#### I.A. Results

My literary review of Burnside scholarship has suggested the need for an engagement with Emerson, James, and Santayana, to the degree that they bridge the Romantic and the phenomenological. My readings of Burnside's poetry suggests that the influence of Bergson, Deleuze, and Heidegger are not foreign to this American dimension, and by implication it proposes that deeper engagement with New England universities and theories of consciousness in the American



nineteenth-century parallels and is in tension with the European twentieth-century post-humanist models of thought that present themselves directly to Burnside.

Heidegger's critique of technology spells how the one-dimensional disclosure of earth as pure resource is a result not of human decision-making but of the developments of being within history. Burnside's politics of dominion relinquishes this particular historic trajectory in its promotion of the human receiving and giving simultaneously. The emphasis is upon dynamism and relation rather than control. It can be viewed as co-creation. As fluidity, it can be critiqued for its connotation of quietism in an age where human action appears crucial. The emphasis on stillness suggests the impasse that humans face in approaching the ecological catastrophe while the poetry mediates between desire and asceticism. A defence can be raised by the suggestion of metaphysical incompleteness without the other, particularly poignant in TLT and its closing poem. Love as the discovery of continuation across bodies, re-enactments of the world's creations, and compassionate affirmation of the other, is represented by the fleeting blackbird. This bird externalizes a mental process while its presence is given an inward occasion as an idea. This is the ability to summon images, and for consciousness to attain itself via naming, but most crucially, it is mind as the habitat in which it moves, and it is nothing without inter-relation. In the final poem to TLT ("A Theory of Everything") the closing line enables phenomenology to inform the false dichotomy between human and nature: we do not experience the human and the nature of sites in singularity, but we experience them holistically. The dialectic is one of co-dependence between the human contribution and the natural process. With this understanding of how the world figures for us we see no separating out and we better understand what makes human activities and the experience of phenomena possible. We do not read

givens but context, setting and the backdrop in which all things reveal themselves: nature experienced in human practice.

Finally, Burnside's apocalyptic lens suggests the completion of metaphysics lies in proximity to the extreme oblivion of all life. His post-Romantic treatment of togetherness and separation, solipsism and community, the individual and community, learns from the constellation of the parsed and wider self, and poetics of inclusion over incorporation. The contradiction between a non-anthropocentric ethic and authorial commitment in the lyric beyond the phenomenological (as a means to historically contextualize and promote the intention of the 'I') is perhaps less incoherent than a philosophy which advances subjective experience into the fundamental/sole basis of knowledge while demolishing the idea of the subject: the shift into the nameless is to enter into the larger 'we' where the I still resides, albeit heterophenomenologically. Thus the metaphysical implications of ecology, no longer marginalized as an imaginative alterity set against social actuality but a discourse driven by it, delivers the possibilities of making sense of experience and confidently shaping a sense of home.

## II. New Directions

As prolegomenon, this thesis has introduced important concepts and lines of thought that provide a framework for future advanced studies of Burnside and his contemporaries. I have suggested that my counters assist the closing of the gap between Wordsworth and Burnside via American literature and ecocriticism. The ecology of ideas that are present negates a final level of distillation.

Furthermore, the poet's exaltation of figures of exile -- Osip Mandelstam, Karl Marx, Benjamin, Dante, Guillén etc. -- seems to override the theological hinterland that derives from a Catholic

schooling and temporal terminus at St Andrews. However, I argue that a first move to Burnside should read deep ecological psychology critically in terms of the degree that this offers compensatory transcendence, an understanding of exile, and the platform for right dwelling. I have read this via ecocriticism's view on human-nature relationships and I argue that Burnside's mysticism is rescued by the political acuity of his ethics. Moreover, "History" (2) forwards the unstable role of mental and geographical place/stance in the creative process. The poem highlights how the maker shuttles between communal situation and personal conflict, and how this energy colours the quest for coherence and integrity of our actions in a disintegrated and fragile world.

Kit Fan has read of the "pivot between necessity and obedience" (129) in the circulation of Simone Weil's influence in contemporary American poetics, providing Jorie Graham a site to "articulate a lyrical 'attempt' at 'praying' ["Praying (Attempt of June 6 '03)", Overlord, 2005]" (133). This Eliotian depersonalization, or extinction of personality in the nameless, finds a connection to Kantian disinterest and to Burnside's call to dehumanize and be faceless (GS). My reading of Burnside suggests that an additional imperative is to balance this against historical facticity, memory, and portent, leading to another version of doubt upon the stability of self and autonomy of experience.

Furthermore, while consideration of masculinity and violence in relation to this as determinant for men "intrinsically involved and corrupted by power" (Burnside "Masculinity" 122), which requires "transcendence of any need for power or control", it should not be considered in isolation. I have offered the role of the father figure as character in the poems and the significant masculine symbol of power in terms other than gendered or psychological states, but as

a return to thoughts on difference and otherness in terms of *consanguinity*. Over and above paternalistic faith, the promotion of interrelation, commonalities, and affinity in Burnside's particular instance, show oneness bereft of origin (AL); his turn to life, which resists both looking inwards, and piety toward origin and locality, is one made via mourning. To measure his depiction of power against his ethical stance would extend these symbols into a framework where aspiration ranks higher than desire. This cannot decouple from the stoical stress on intelligibility, one that secures future desires and relishes present richness knowingly compromised by biotic impoverishment. Here, a worthwhile life may evolve. Burnside's poetry reflects upon the fact that our ideals cannot be fought in sincerity without firm ground, that our values arise from the virtue of wisdom that sees meaningful relations above the packaged world. The interchange of animal worlds, the craft of husbandry, and the learning of diverse habitats are the agglomerate of death and life and instinct for confidence and skill (Bachelard 103-104) known to feed the soul.

I have resisted extending these counters too far. Burnside's sensitivity to modes of power, the combined use of science and theology, his particular use of flora and fauna, the infusion of the natural with the urban and technological into one realm, all suggest further investigation. In Burnside's poetry, the sensorial meets the phenomenological as a means to sing that life has meaning beyond the immediate gratification of the senses, which as a stance in itself, bears upon the human predicament. Rather than looking backwards, it is the predicament of being instilled in the future perfect tense in relation to material events, where worlds (past, present, and future) endure in one still moment. Yet the problematic of the phenomenological lyric in Burnside's hands, as indicated above, instils all poetry as continuum that knows no perfect tense, and

while it can act as an agent against the poetic it can also gesture toward a level of reality and pure energy without time and space. It may relinquish music and poetic effect in attempt to forward the unmade and free; in Bergsonian terms it would be the one with number in potential, virtual coexistence of pure space. This site can be claimed by historical materialism and it could further illuminate the phase of late capitalism that is the oeuvre's context.

### III. Closing Reflections on Cultural Studies

I have argued for TLT as a peak in Burnside's metaphysics before GS and I have stated that it forwards revelation over verification. This has been borne out and influenced by my Heideggerian critical apparatus applied to Th onwards to outline Greek alethia -- unconcealedness, over Roman veritas -- correspondence of mind to thing. It has also offered poetic correspondences across metaphor and ecology. Spanos reminds us that veritas is an "end-oriented mode of inquiry" (152), a will to power of sorts of the naturalized spatial trope (163). This he contrasts to post-modernist open-ended poeisis, and suggests that end-oriented literary forms, such as cultural studies, abandon the intellectual (and spiritual) quest and posit desire for the world picture and in-so-doing lose the revolutionary initiative to "rethink thinking/poeisis" (154). Spanos is setting in opposition the decentred ontological centre and hyperrealism. What levels of realism or errancy in Burnside, and what role ecocriticism here?

One could argue for a lack of structure and instrumentalist language in Burnside's poetry; one, too, could argue that a persuasive and manipulative phenomenological thread and urgency in the voice are part of the colonizing of thinking that the world picture achieves -- moreover, the ideology of ecological decline is

the ultimate world picture and conservative metanarrative. However, ecocritical emphases that read sensitive, personal, and local pictures and history show care both for craft and its position within contemporary discourse. Burnside's inquiry, I argue, defines the interregnum that poetry can operate within and works to sustain the unhomed thinker, who, in Spanos' frame, speaks an unsayable language unanswerable to the public and colonized realm (189). This reminds Americanists of Emerson's "thoughts and principles not marketable or perishable" ("The Transcendentalist" Collected 1: 216): poetry as a form of dissidence that survives "In the valley of its making where executives / Would never want to tamper" (Auden "In Memory of W.B. Yeats" Abrams et al. 2506-07, 2: 6-7; Burnside Polemic 7-8). A cultural study of the poetics of ecological consciousness in the twenty-first century will inevitably meet case studies of this kind, its task is to illuminate their interfaces with a tradition and its particularly unique contours, textures, and philosophical perspectives that can be verified.

Having outlined an approach to Burnside it is yet unclear whether a reformulation of the theoretical foundation should reflect merely ecocritical concerns. However, it is indisputable if further work needs to deviate at all from a critical distaste for the technique of living that has surpassed the wild and artful game of life Burnside celebrates. The theatre as embodiment of life over static and virtual politico-economical simulacrum is where a sustainable and evolutionary revisionist stance of internationalism, plurality, and diversity operates. It may have to give sway to the local redress. The challenge is to reclaim this as non-reactionary, positive faith.

## Works Cited

- Abrams, M.H. "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age." Romanticism Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute. Ed. Northrop Frye. New York: Columbia UP, 1963. 26-72.
- . The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. New York: W.W. Norton, 1958.
- , et al., eds. The Norton Anthology of English Literature. 7th ed. Vol. 2. London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2000.
- Adorno, T.W. Aesthetic Theory. Ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedmann. Trans. C. Lendhart. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.
- . Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life. London: Verso, 1974.
- Agamben, Giorgio. Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford UP, 1998.
- Alighieri, Dante. The Divine Comedy. Trans. John D. Sinclair. Vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1939.
- Allen, Graham. Intertextuality. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Allen, Paula Gunn. "The Sacred Hoop." The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology. Ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. London: U of Georgia P, 1996. 241-63.
- Andersson, Dag T. "'Only the Other Versions of Myself': Images of the Other in the Poetry of John Burnside." Chapman 96 (2000): 35-39.
- "Animal Health And Welfare: Foot and Mouth." Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs. 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://www.defra.gov.uk/footandmouth/>>.
- Arendt, Hannah. Men in Dark Times. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970.
- Bachelard, Gaston. The Poetics of Space. Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969.

- Baker, Timothy C. "Praying to an Absent God: The Poetic Revealing of Simone Weil." Culture, Theory and Critique 47.2 (2006): 133-147.
- Bate, Jonathan. "Comfort Food for Thought." Rev. of The Thunder Mutters: 101 Poems for the Planet, ed. Alice Oswald. Guardian Unlimited 30 Apr. 2005. 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1472570,00.html>>.
- . "Culture and Environment: From Hardy to Austen." New Literary History 30.3 (1999): 541-60.
- . "Eco Laurels." Rev. of The Light Trap, by John Burnside. Guardian Unlimited 23 Nov. 2002. 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,844634,00.html>>.
- . "Out of the Twilight." New Statesman. 16 July, 2001. 25-27.
- . Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- . The Song of the Earth. London: Picador, 2000.
- Bateson, Gregory. Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology. Ayelsbury, Bucks: Intertext, 1972.
- Benjamin, Walter. Selected Writings. Vol. 1. Ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1996.
- . "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism. Ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al. London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2001. 1166-86.
- Bense, James. "At Odds with 'De-Transcendentalizing Emerson': The Case of William James." New England Quarterly 79.3 (2006): 355-86.
- Bergson, Henri Louis. Creative Evolution. Trans A. Mitchell. London: MacMillan, 1911.
- . Dreams. Trans. Edwin E. Slosson. London: Fisher Unwin, 1914.
- . Matter and Memory. Trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott



- Palmer. London: Swann Sonnenschein and Company, 1911.
- . The Creative Mind. Trans. Mabelle L. Andison. New York: Philosophical Library, 1946.
- Berkeley, Richard. Coleridge and the Crisis of Reason. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007.
- Bishop, Elizabeth. One Art: The Selected Letters. Ed. Robert Giroux. London: Chatto and Windus, 1994.
- . The Collected Prose. Ed. Robert Giroux. London: Chatto and Windus, 1994.
- . The Complete Poems. London: Chatto and Windus, 1983.
- Bloom, Harold. The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry. New York: Oxford UP, 1973.
- . Map of Misreading. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003.
- . Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens. New Haven: Yale UP, 1976.
- . The Western Canon: The Books and Schools of The Ages. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994.
- . The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry. Rev. ed. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1971.
- . Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977.
- Bonnefoy, Yves. "Lifting Our Eyes from the Page." Critical Inquiry 16 (1990): 794-806.
- Borthwick, David. "Learning to Observe the Winters: Absence and Abandonment in the Poetry of John Burnside." Address Conf. on Poetic Ecologies: Nature as Text and Text as Nature in English Language Verse, Université Libre de Bruxelles. Best Western County House Hotel, Brussels. 17 May, 2008.
- Bowie, Andrew. Aesthetics and Subjectivity: from Kant to Nietzsche. 2nd ed. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003.
- . Schelling and Modern European Philosophy: An Introduction.

- London: Routledge, 1993.
- . "German Idealism and the Arts." The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism. Ed. Karl Ameriks. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 239-57.
- . "The Romantic Connection: Neurath, The Frankfurt School, and Heidegger (Part One)." British Journal for the History of Philosophy 8.2 (2000): 275-98.
- Breton, André. Conversations: The Autobiography of Surrealism. Trans. Mark Polizzotti. New York: Paragon House, 1993.
- . Manifestos of Surrealism. Trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1972.
- . Nadja. Trans. Richard Howard. Middlesex: Penguin, 1999.
- . "The Situation of Surrealism Between The Two Wars." Trans. R.G.C. Yale French Studies 2 (1948): 67-78.
- Bristow, Tom. "'Contracted to an Eye-Quiet World': Sonic Census or Poetics of Place in Alice Oswald." Symbiosis 10.2 (2006): 167-185.
- Buell, Lawrence. Emerson. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 2003.
- . Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance. Ithaca; London: Cornell UP, 1973.
- . The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1995.
- Bukowski, Charles. All's Normal Here: A Charles Bukowski Primer. Ed. Glazier Los Pequeno. Fremont, CA: Ruddy Duck Press, 1985.
- Bunyan, John. The Pilgrim's Progress. Ed. James Blanton Wharey. 2nd ed. Roger Sharrock. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1960.
- Burnside, John. A Lie About My Father. London: Jonathan Cape, 2006.
- . A Normal Skin. London: Jonathan Cape, 1997.
- . A Poet's Polemic: Otro Mundo es Posible: Poetry, Dissidence and Reality TV. Edinburgh: Scottish Book Trust, 2003.

- . "A Science of Belonging: Poetry as Ecology." Contemporary Science and Contemporary Poetry. Ed. Robert Crawford. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006. 91-106.
- . "American Poetry After 1945." The Poetry House Website of The University of St Andrews. 1 Oct. 2007  
<[http://www.thepoetryhouse.org/Petryrooms/usa\\_after1945.html](http://www.thepoetryhouse.org/Petryrooms/usa_after1945.html)>.
- . "An Interview." with Allison Funk. Sou'wester (2002): 8-22.
- . "Base." Guardian Unlimited. 22 Mar. 2003. 1 Oct. 2007  
<<http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/poetry/story/0,,919280,00.html>>.
- . "Bunkered by Mr. Big". Guardian Unlimited. 28 July 2001. 1 Oct. 2007  
<<http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/physicalscience/story/0,,528528,00.html>>.
- . "Caller Water." 'Heaven-taught Fergusson': Robert Burns's favourite Scottish poet. Ed. Robert Crawford. East Linton: Tuckwell, 2003.
- . "Certain Weather." Trees In The City: Poems About The Need For Action on Climate Change. London: Axon Publishing, 2007. 28-37.
- . Common Knowledge. London: Secker and Warburg, 1991.
- . "Dead Poets: Marianne Moore, William Carlos Williams". Stanza Poetry Festival. St Andrews. 20 Mar. 2005.
- . "Fact Fiction History Myth Reality Fantasy Truth Lies." Daily Telegraph 12 Mar. 2006. 1 Oct. 2007  
<<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2006/03/05/boburnside.xml>>.
- . Feast Days. London: Secker and Warburg, 1992.
- . Gift Songs. London: Jonathan Cape, 2007.
- . "Homage To Henri Bergson." The Red Wheelbarrow 10. Ed. Fiona Benson, Louisa Gairn and David Taylor. St Andrews: St Andrews

- University Poetry House, 2004. 29-33.
- . Interview with W. N. Herbert. Verse 9.2 (1992): 74-82.
  - . Interview with William Oxley. Acumen 57 (2007): 58-65.
  - . "Iona: A Quest for the Pagan." Southfields 6.2 (2000): 21-25.
  - . "Ida Y Vuelta." Letras Libres Apr. 2001. 1 Oct. 2007  
<http://www.letraslibres.com/index.php?art=7174>.
  - . "Lazarus." Gairfish (1991): 91-100.
  - . "Listening To Silence" Poetry Book Socceity Bulletin. 185  
 (Summer 2000): 8-9.
  - . "Learning to Fly." Granta 94 (2006): 103-16.
  - . "Madly Protective." Rev. of The Possession of Mr Cave by Matt Haig. Guardian Unlimited 7 June 2008. 9 June 2008  
<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,2284274,00.html>.
  - . "Masculinity: The Problems of Power and the Possibility of Grace." Edinburgh Review 100 (1999): 119-23.
  - . "Mind the Gap: On Reading American Poetry." Poetry Review 96.3 (2006): 56-67.
  - . "Notes Towards an Ecology of Home." University of Edinburgh, Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH), Scotland's Transatlantic Relations (STAR) Lecture. National Library of Scotland. Nov. 29 2004.
  - . "On The Light Trap." Poetry Book Society Bulletin 193 (Summer 2002): 8-9.
  - . "Peach Melba." Guardian Unlimited 11 Aug. 2007. 1 Oct. 2007  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/weekend/story/0,,2145414,00.html>.
  - . "Poems." Chapman 96 (2000): 40-43.
  - . "Poetry and a Sense of Place." Nordlit 1 (1996) 1 Oct. 2007  
<http://www.hum.uit.no/nordlit/1/burnside.html>.
  - . "Poets and Other Animals." Interview with Attila Dosa. Scottish Studies Review 4.1 (2003): 9-23.
  - . "Poet's Parliament." Edinburgh Review 100 (1999): 71

- . "Presiding Spirits." Magma 22 (2002): 9-12.
- . "Red in Tooth and Green in Claw." Interview with James Hopkin. Guardian Unlimited. 11 May, 2002. 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/generalfiction/story/0,,713245,00.html>>.
- . "Something Like Happy." New Yorker. 23 Apr. 2007. 68-77.
- . "Standards of Belief." Guardian Unlimited. 25 Jan. 2003. 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,881041,00.html>>.
- . "Strong Words." Strong Words: Modern Poets on Modern Poetry. Ed. W. N. Herbert and Matthew Hollis. Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 2000. 259-61.
- . Swimming in the Flood. London: Jonathan Cape, 1995.
- . "The Argentine Skunk" Irish Pages 2.2 (2004): 196.
- . The Asylum Dance. London: Jonathan Cape, 2000.
- . "The Asylum Dance" Scottish Books Direct Catalogue 2 2001.
- . The Good Neighbour. London: Jonathan Cape, 2006.
- . The hoop. Manchester: Carcanet, 1988.
- . "The House That Jerry Built." Rev. of Some Great Thing, by Colin McAdam, The Scotsman 20 Mar. 2004, 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/ViewArticle.aspx?articleid=2513017>>.
- . The Light Trap. London: Jonathan Cape, 2002.
- . The Myth of The Twin. London: Jonathan Cape, 1994.
- . "The Rhythms of Wind, Tide and God." Rev. of Hellfire and Herring, by Christopher Rush. Guardian 20 Jan. 2007. <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1993737,00.html>>.
- . "The Visceral Muse." Rev. of The Ice Pilot Speaks, by Pauline Stainer. Poetry Review 85.2 (1995): 79-80.
- . "'The Wonder of Daylight': In Search of A Delicate Balance." Poetry Review 98.1 (2008): 52-60.

- . "Three Enquiries Concerning Angels (After Paul Klee)." Poetry London 51 (2005): 4-5.
- . "Travelling into the Quotidian: Some Notes on Allison Funk's 'Heartland' Poems." Poetry Review 95.2 (2005): 59-70.
- . "Underground Routes." Rev. of District and Circle, by Seamus Heaney. The Scotsman. 1 Apr. 2006. 18-19.
- . "What I Know About Myself." Southfields 5.3 (1996): 84-90.
- , and W. N. Herbert, Liz Lohead, Don Paterson. The Poetry Quartets: 7. Tarsset: British Council and Bloodaxe, 2000.
- , and Richard Holloway. "In Conversation." Stanza Poetry Festival. St Andrews. 19 Mar. 2005.
- , and Maurice Riordan, eds. Wild Reckoning: An Anthology Provoked by Rachel Carson's Silent Spring. London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2004.
- Bushell, Sally. Re-reading The Excursion: Narrative, Response and the Wordsworthian Dramatic Voice. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.
- Carroll, Joseph. "Stevens and Romanticism." Cambridge Companion to Wallace Stevens. Ed. John N. Serio. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 87-102.
- . Wallace Stevens' Supreme Fiction: A New Romanticism. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1987.
- Cavell, Stanley. The Senses of Walden. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1981.
- Christensen, Laird. "The Pragmatic Mysticism of Mary Oliver." Ecopoetry: A Critical Introduction. Ed. J. Scott Bryson. Salt Lake City: U of Utah P, 2002. 135-52.
- Clark, Timothy. "Being in Mime: Heidegger and Derrida on the Ontology of Literary Language." MLN 101.5 (1986): 1003-21.
- . The Theory of Inspiration: Composition as a Crisis of Subjectivity in Romantic and Post-Romantic Writing. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997.

- Colebrook, Claire. Philosophy and Post-Structuralism: from Kant to Deleuze. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2005.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Aids to Reflection. London: Routledge, 1993.
- . Critical and Miscellaneous Essays. London: Chapman and Hall, 1887.
- . Sartor Resartus; Lectures on Heroes. London: Chapman and Hall, 1893.
- . The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Vol 2. Ed. Kathleen Coburn. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Coupe, Lawrence. "Bate & Levis: An Ecocritical Connection?" Green Letters 2 (2000): 13-19.
- Crawford, Robert. Identifying Poets: Self and Territory in Twentieth-Century Poetry. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1993.
- , ed. Contemporary Science and Contemporary Poetry. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006.
- Creeley, Robert. Selected Poems 1945-2005. Ed. Benjamin Friedlander. Berkley, Calif.: U of California P, 2008.
- Critchley, Simon. Thing Merely Are: Philosophy in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Crucefix, Martin. "The First Elusive Threads of Unmade Souls." Rev. of Selected Poetry, by John Burnside, Row, by Tomaz Salamun and Redgrove's Wife, by Penelope Shuttle. Poetry London (Autumn 2006): 33-35.
- Dawes, Kwame. "Some Lovely Nature Poems in Two Flawed Anthologies." Rev. of Wild Reckoning: An Anthology Provoked by Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, ed. John Burnside and Maurice Riordan, and The Thunder Mutters: 101 Poems for the Planet Ed. Alice Oswald. Poetry London 51 (2005).
- de Graef, Ortwin. "Epistle to the Europeans: On Not Reading Kipling." Department of English Literature Visiting Speaker

- Seminar. University of Edinburgh. 9 Feb. 2007.
- . Serenity in Crisis: A Preface to Paul de Man. Lincoln, Neb; London: U of Nebraska P, 1993.
  - . Titanic Light: Paul de Man's Post-Romanticism 1960-1969. Lincoln, Neb: U of Nebraska P, 1995.
  - de Man, Paul. Aesthetic Ideology. Ed. Andrzej Warminski. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996.
  - . Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism. 2nd ed. London: Methuen, 1983.
  - . Critical Writings, 1953-1978. Ed. Lindsay Waters. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1989.
  - . Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism: The Gauss Seminar and Other Papers. Ed. E. S. Burt, Kevin Newmark, Andrzej Warminski. London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993.
  - . Interview with Robert Moynihan. Yale Review 73.4 (1984): 576-602.
  - . "The Literature of Nihilism." Rev. of The Artist's Journey into the Interior, by Eric Heller and The German Tradition in Literature, by Ronald Gray. New York Review of Books 6.11 (1966): 16-20.
  - . The Resistance to Theory. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1986.
  - . The Rhetoric of Romanticism. New York: Columbia UP, 1984.
  - . "Time and History in Wordsworth." Diacritics 17.4 (1987): 4-17.
  - Deleuze, Gilles. Bergsonism. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. New York: Zone, 1988.
  - . Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life. Trans. Anne Boyman. New York: Zone Books, 2001.
  - . What is Philosophy? Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill. London: Verso, 1994.
  - , and Felix Guattari. A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and



- Schizophrenia. Trans. Brian Massumi. London: Continuum, 2004.
- . Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Trans. Robert Herley et al. London: Athlone, 1984.
- Dennet, Daniel, C. "Who's on First?: Heterophenomenology Explained". TUFTS University Centre for Cognitive Studies. <<http://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/papers/JCSarticle.pdf>> 1 Oct. 2007.
- Dickinson, Emily. The Poems of Emily Dickinson. Ed. Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson. Little Brown and Company: 1936.
- Doggett, Frank. "This Invented World: Stevens' 'Notes Toward A Supreme Fiction.'" ELH 28.3 (1961):284-299.
- Donoghue, Denis. Connoisseurs of Chaos: Ideas of Order in Modern American Poetry. 2nd. ed. New York: Columbia UP, 1984.
- Doty, Mark. "On Robert Browning." Poets on Poets. Manchester: Carcanet, 1997. 37.
- . "Selected Works: A Line of American Poetry", Scottish Poetry Library Public Reading. Scottish Poetry Library, Edinburgh. 15 Mar. 2005.
- . "What is American about American Poetry?" Poetry Society of America 1 Oct. 2007. <<http://www.poetrysociety.org/doty.html>>.
- Dylan, Bob. New Morning. Columbia Records, 1970.
- Eagleton, Terry. Marxism and Literary Criticism. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Eckhart, Bart. "Stevens and Philosophy." Cambridge Companion to Wallace Stevens. Ed. John N. Serio. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 103-117.
- Ekkehart, Malotki. A Linguistic Analysis of the Temporal Concepts in the Hopi Language. Berlin: Mouton, 1983.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Alfred R. Ferguson et al. 7 vols. to date. Cambridge, Mass:

- Harvard UP, 1971-.
- , and Margaret Fuller. "The Editors to the Reader," *The Dial*, 1.1 (1840): 1-4
- Errington, Lindsay. William McTaggart 1835-1910. Edinburgh: National Gallery of Scotland, 1989.
- Fan, Kit. "'Between the Blank Page and the Poem': Reading Simone Weil in Contemporary American Poets." The Cambridge Quarterly 36.2 (2007): 129-54.
- Ferguson, Frances. "Shelley's Mont Blanc: What the Mountain Said." Romanticism and Language. Ed. Arden Reed. London: Methuen, 1984. 202-214.
- . Wordsworth, Language as Counter-Spirit. New Haven: Yale UP, 1977.
- Filreis, Alan. Wallace Stevens and the Actual World. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991.
- Fish, Stanley. "French Theory in America." The New York Times 6 Apr. 2008. 14 Apr. 2008  
<<http://fish.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/04/06/french-theory-in-america/index.html>>.
- Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality. Trans. Robert Hurley. Vol. 1. London: Allen Lane, 1979.
- Frost, Robert. Collected Poems, Prose, and Plays. New York: Library of America, 1995.
- . Complete Poems. London: Jonathan Cape, 1951.
- Frow, John. "A Pebble, A Camera, a Man Who Turns into a Telegraphy Pole." Critical Inquiry 28.1 (2001): 270-285.
- . Marxism and Literary History. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.
- Gairn, Louisa. "Aspects of Modern Scottish Literature and Ecological Thought." Diss., U of St Andrews, 2005.
- Garrard, Greg. Ecocriticism. London: Routledge, 2004.
- . "Heidegger, Heaney and the Problem of Dwelling." Writing the

- Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature. Ed. Richard Kerridge and Neil Sammells. London: Zed, 1998.
- . "Radical Pastoral?" Studies in Romanticism 35.3 (1996): 459-65.
- Gibson, James J. The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception. Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1979.
- Gifford, Terry. Green Voices: Understanding Contemporary Nature Poetry. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1995.
- . Pastoral. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Glotfelty, Cheryll and Harold Fromm, eds. The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology. London: U of Georgia P, 1996.
- Graham, Jorie. Interview with Thomas Gardner. "The Art of Poetry No. 85." Paris Review 165 (2003): 52-97.
- . Overlord: Poems. Manchester: Carcanet, 2005.
- . The Dream of the Unified Field. Manchester: Carcanet, 1996.
- Guattari, Félix. The Three Ecologies. Trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton. London: Continuum, 2000.
- Guignon, Charles. "Being as Appearing: Retrieving the Greek Experience of Phusis." A Companion to Heidegger's "Introduction to Metaphysics". Eds. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt. New Haven: Yale UP: 2001.
- Haar, Michel. "Attunement and Thinking." Heidegger: A Critical Reader. Ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Harrison Hall. London: Blackwell, 1992. 158-72.
- . The Song of the Earth: Heidegger and the Grounds of the History of Being. Trans. Reginald Lilly. Indianapolis: UP of Indiana, 1993.
- Hammer, Dean. "Hannah Arendt and Roman Political Thought: The Practice of Theory." Political Theory 30.1 (2002): 124-149.
- Hanssen, Beatrice. Walter Benjamin's Other History: Of Stones, Animals, Human Beings and Angels. Berkley: U of California P,

1998.

Harrison, Robert Pogue. Forests: The Shadow of Civilization.  
Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992.

---. "Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself." New Literary History 30.3 (1999): 661-673.

Hart, Kevin. "The Poetics of the Negative." Reading the Text: Biblical Criticism and Literary Theory. Ed. Stephen Prickett.  
Oxford: Blackwell, 1991. 281-340.

Hartman, Geoffrey H. The Unremarkable Wordsworth. London: Methuen,  
1987.

Havelock, Eric A. Origins of Western literacy : Four lectures delivered at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, March 25, 26, 27, 28, 1974. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1976.

Heaney, Seamus. "Bog Bank, Rock Face and the Far Fetch of Poetry." Address. Conf. on Natural and Cultural Landscapes: the Geological Foundations. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. 9 Sep. 2002.

---. "Crediting Poetry: The Nobel Lecture 7 Dec. 1995." Oldcastle, County Meath: Gallery Books, 1995.

---. "Introduction." Sorley MacLean: Critical Essays. Ed. Raymond J. Ross and Joy Hendry. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1986. 1-8.

---. Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-1978. London: Faber and Faber, 1980.

---. Finders Keepers: Selected Prose 1971-2001. London: Faber and Faber, 2002.

Hegel, G. W. F. Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art. Trans. T. M. Knox. Vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon, 1975.

Heidegger, Martin. Basic Writings. Ed. David Farrell Krell. London: Routledge, 1993.

- . Being and Time. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. London: Blackwell, 1962.
- . Contributions to Philosophy (from Enowning). Trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999.
- . On The Way to Language. Trans. Peter D. Hertz. London: Harper Row, 1971.
- . On Time and Being. Trans. J. Strambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.
- . Poetry, Language, Thought. Trans. A. Hofstadter. New York: Harper Row, 1971.
- . The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude. Trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995.
- . The Phenomenology of Religious Life. Trans. Matthias Fritsch and J.A. Gosetti-Ferencei. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2004.
- . The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays. Trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- Herbert, W.N. "Coast to Coast". Scotland on Sunday. 23 July, 2000.
- Herdman, John. "The Ghost Seen By the Soul: Sorley MacLean and the Absolute." Sorley MacLean: Critical Essays. Ed. Raymond J. Ross and Joy Hendry. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1986.
- Hickey, Alison. Impure Conceits: Rhetoric and Ideology in Wordsworth's Excursion. California: Stanford UP, 1997.
- Hirshfield, Jane. Of Gravity and Angels. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1988.
- Hitt, Christopher. "Towards an Ecological Sublime." New Literary History 30.2 (1999): 603-23.
- Hölderlin, Friedrich. Hyperion and Selected Poems. Ed. Eric L. Santer. New York: Continuum, 1990.
- . Poems and Fragments. Trans. Michael Hamburger. London: Anvil Press, 2004.

- Hume, David. An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding. Ed. Tom L. Beauchamp. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
- Horgby, Ingar. "The Double Awareness in Heidegger and Wittgenstein". Inquiry 2 (1959): 235-64.
- Horstmann, Rolf-Peter. "The Early Philosophy of Fichte and Schelling." The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism. Ed. Karl Ameriks. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 117-40.
- Hughes, Ted. The Hawk in the Rain. London: Faber and Faber, 1957.
- Husserl, Edmund. Experience and Judgement: Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic. Trans. J. Churchill and K. Ameriks. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1973.
- Ingold, Tim. "An Anthropologist looks at Biology." MAN 25.2 (1990): 208-29.
- . Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Innis, Harold A. The Bias of Communication. Toronto; London: U of Toronto P, 1991.
- Jackson, Timothy. "Essential Crispin." Rev. of Wallace Stevens: Poetry and Criticism by Tim Morris. Essays in Criticism 58.2 (2008): 188- 192.
- James, William. A Pluralistic Universe. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1977.
- . Principles of Psychology. Vol. 1. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1981.
- . The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1985.
- Jamie, Kathleen. "Aird's Moss." Granta 90 (2005): 85-98.
- . Findings. London: Sort Of, 2005.
- . The Tree House. London: Picador, 2004.
- Kant, Immanuel. The Critique of Pure Reason. Trans Norman Kemp Smith. Rev ed. Howard Caygill. Basingstoke: Palgrave

- Macmillan, 2003.
- Kelly, Brigit Pegeen. Song: Poems. Brockport, NY: BOA Editions, 1995.
- Kerridge, Richard. "Environmentalism and Ecocriticism." Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide. Ed. Patricia Waugh. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006.
- . "Narratives of Resignation: Environmentalism in Recent Fiction." The Environmental Tradition in English Literature. Ed. John Parham. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002. 87-99.
- . "Small Rooms and the Eco-system: Environmentalism in Deillo's White Noise." Writing the Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature. Ed. Richard Kerridge and Neil Sammells. London: Zed, 1998. 182-95.
- Kerrigan, John. "Wordsworth and the Sonnet: Building, Dwelling, Thinking." Essays in Criticism 35 (1985): 45-75.
- Kleinzahler, August. "What is Left Out" Rev. of Robert Creeley Selected Poems: 1945-2005 Ed. by Benjamin Friedlander. The New York Times 24 Feb. 2008. 13 Mar. 2008
- <[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/24/books/review/Kleinzahler-t.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=print&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/24/books/review/Kleinzahler-t.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print&oref=slogin)>.
- Kroeber, Karl. Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of Mind. New York: Columbia UP, 1994.
- . "Home at Grasmere: Ecological Holiness." PMLA 89.1 (1974): 132-41.
- , and Gene W. Ruoff, eds. Romantic Poetry: Recent Revisionary Criticism. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1993.
- Larkin, Peter. "Coleridge Conversing: Between Soliloquy and Invocation." The Wordsworth Circle 37.3 (2007): 113-117.
- Law, John. "Disaster in Agriculture: Or Foot and Mouth Mobilities." The Centre for Science Studies. Lancaster University (2004) 1 Oct. 2007. <<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/sociology/papers/law->

disaster-mobilities-foot-and-mouth.pdf>

Lawrence, D. H. Studies in Classic American Literature. London: Penguin, 1971.

Leitch, Vincent B. Deconstructive Criticism: An Advanced Introduction. London: Hutchinson, 1983.

Leopold, Aldo Starker. A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There. New York: Oxford UP, 1949.

Lichtig, Toby. "The Devil Rides Out." Rev. of Gift Songs, and The Devil's Footprints, by John Burnside. Observer 18 Mar. 2007. 1 Oct. 2007

<<http://books.guardian.co.uk/reviews/generalfiction/0,,2036483,00.html>>.

Longley, Michael. "An Outsider Searching for His Home." Interview with Eileen Battersby. Irish Times 11 Jan. 1992 5.

Lotman, Yuri Mikhailovich. "O Semiosfere". Sign Systems Studies (Trudy po znakovym sistemam) 17 (1984): 5-23.

Love, Glen A. Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and Environment. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2003.

Lucas, John. "Souls, Ghosts, Angels and 'Things Not Human': John Burnside, Alice Oswald and Kathleen Jamie." PN Review 177 (2007): 27-32

Lynen, John Fairbanks. The Pastoral Art of Robert Frost. New Haven: Yale UP, 1960.

Lyon, Judson Stanley. The Excursion: A Study. New Haven: Yale UP, 1950.

MacCaffrey, Isobel. "A Point of Central Arrival: Stevens' The Rock." ELH 40.4 (1973): 606-33.

MacDiarmid, Hugh. Stony Limits and Other Poems. London: Gollancz, 1934.

Maclean, Will. Driftworks. Dundee: Dundee Contemporary Arts, 2002.

Macpherson, Hugh. "Scottish Writers: John Burnside." Scottish Book



Collector 11 (1989): 11-12.

Malcolm, Norman. Nothing is Hidden: Wittgenstein's Criticism of his Early Thought. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.

Manes, Christopher. "Nature and Silence." The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology. Ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens and London: U of Georgia P, 1996. 15-29.

Manning, Susan. Fragments of Union: Making Connections in Scottish and American Writing. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.

---. The Puritan Provincial Vision: Scottish and American Literature in the Nineteenth Century. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.

Martz, Louis L. The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century. New Haven: Yale UP, 1954.

Marx, Leo. The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1964.

McGann, Jerome J. The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation. Chicago, Ill: Chicago UP, 1983.

McGonigal, James. "Analysing Silence: Burnside's The Myth of the Twin." Southfields 20.5 (1995): 20-25.

---. "Recusant Grace: The Religious Impulse in John Burnside's Verse." Verse 10.1 (1993): 65-72.

---, Donny O'Rourke, and Hamish Whyte, eds. Across The Water: Irishness in Modern Scottish Writing. Glendaurel: Argyll, 2000. 236-241.

McGrath, Sean J. "Heidegger and Duns Scotus on Truth and Language." Review of Metaphysics 57.2 (2003): 323-43.

McLuhan, Marshall, and Edmund Snow Carpenter, eds. Explorations in Communication: An Anthology. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960.

McMillan, Ian. "John Burnside: The Myth of the Twin" Poetry Review 84.1 (1994): 75-78.

McNew, Janet. "Mary Oliver and the Tradition of Romantic Nature

- Poetry." Contemporary Literature 30.1 (1989): 59-77.
- McNeill, F. Marian. The Silver Bough: Scottish Folk-Lore and Folk-Belief. Ed. Canongate, 1956.
- Milder, Robert. "From Emerson to Edwards". New England Quarterly. 80.1 (2007): 96-133.
- Miller, J. Hillis. The Linguistic Moment: From Wordsworth to Stevens. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1985.
- Miller, Perry, ed. The Transcendentalists. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1950.
- Moore, Marianne. The Selected Letters of Marianne Moore. Ed Bonnie Costello, Celeste Goodridge, and Cristanne Miller. London: Faber and Faber, 1998.
- Morley, David. "Networks of Panic and Longing." Rev. of Gift Songs, by John Burnside. Poetry Review 97.2 (2007): 86-88.
- Mulder, William. "Seeing 'New Englandy': Planes of Perception in Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost." New England Quarterly 52.4 (1979): 550-59.
- Myers, G. E. "Pragmatism and Introspective Psychology." The Cambridge Companion to William James. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. 11-24.
- Nagel, Thomas. The View from Nowhere. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.
- Nairn, Thom. "New Carcanet Poetry." Chapman 55-56 (1989): 178-180.
- Nasir, Amina. The Excursion. London: Imedia, 1982.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. On The Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic: By Way of Clarification and Supplement to My Last Book Beyond Good and Evil. Trans. Douglas Smith. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996.
- . Untimely Meditations. Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985.
- Noë, Alva. Action in Perception. Cambridge, Mass; London: MIT Press, 2004.
- O'Brien, Sean. "Recognizably Human and Apparently Other." Rev. of

- Feast Days, by John Burnside. Poetry Review 82.3 (1992): 46-48.
- O'Driscoll, Dennis. "Greek Bearing Presence: John Burnside's 'Parousia'." Poetry Ireland Review 63 (1999): 109-13.
- Ong, Walter J. Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture. Ithaca; London: Cornell UP, 1977.
- O'Rourke, Donny, ed. Dream State: The New Scottish Poets. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Polygon, 2002.
- Oswald, Alice. "Altering the Imagination." The Ted Hughes Memorial Lecture. Dartington Hall, Devon. 15 July 2005.
- . Dart. London: Faber and Faber, 2002.
- . "Wild Things." Guardian Unlimited 3 Dec. 2005. 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/poetry/features/0,,1656445,00.htm>>
- Parham, John. "The Poverty of Ecocritical Theory: E.P. Thompson and the British Perspective." New Formations 64 (2008): 25-36.
- Parsons, Charles. "The Transcendental Aesthetic". The Cambridge Companion to Kant. Ed. Paul Guyer. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. 62-100.
- Paterson, Don and Charles Simic, eds. New British Poetry. Saint Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 2004.
- Paz, Octavio. Alternating Current. Trans. Helen R. Lane. London: Wildwood House, 1974.
- . The Bow and the Lyre. Trans. Ruth L.C. Simms. Austin: U of Texas P, 1973.
- . The Collected Poems 1957-1987. Ed. Eliot Weinberger. London: Paladin, 1991.
- Pearson Gierman, Clare. "Heidegger's Antigones." A Companion to Heidegger's Introduction to Metaphysics Ed. Richard Polt and Gregory Fried. New Haven: Yale UP, 2001. 161-92.
- Peirce, Charles Sanders. Pragmatism as a Principle and Method of

- Right Thinking: the 1903 Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism. Ed. Patricia Ann Turrisi. Albany, New York: State U of New York P, 1997.
- Perloff, Marjorie. "The Fascination of What's Difficult: Emily Dickinson and the Theory Canon." Stand 2.2 (2000): 33-51.
- . The Futurist Moment: Avant Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rupture. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986.
- Phillips, Dana. The Truth of Ecology: Nature, Culture, and Literature in America. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003.
- Plumwood, Val. "Ecosocial Feminism as a General Theory of Oppression." Ecology. Ed. Carolyn Merchant. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1994. 207-19.
- Poirier, Richard. Poetry and Pragmatism. London: Faber and Faber, 1992.
- . Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing. New York: Oxford UP, 1977.
- Polt, Richard and Gregory Fried, eds. A Companion to Heidegger's Introduction to Metaphysics. New Haven: UP of Yale, 2001.
- Poster, Jem. "Between Heaven and Earth." Rev. of Selected Poems, by John Burnside. Guardian Unlimited 8 Apr. 2006. 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1749109,00.html>>.
- Priest, Stephen. Merleau-Ponty. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Rajan, Tilottama. "First Outline of a System of Theory: Schelling and the Margins of Philosophy, 1799-1815." Studies in Romanticism 46.3 (2007): 311-335.
- Redmond, John. "War Against the Grown-Ups." Rev. of The Dumb House, and A Normal Skin, by John Burnside. London Review of Books 19.16 (1997): 23-25.
- Riach, Alan. "The New Poetry in Scotland". Verse 10.2 (1993): 107-112.
- Richardson, Graeme. "John Burnside's Poetry: No Ideas But In Somethings." Areté 10 (2002): 133-44.

- Ricou, Laurie. "Articulating Ecotopia." Canadian Issues 12 (1991): 51-62.
- . Vertical Man/Horizontal World: Man and Landscape in Canadian Prairie Fiction. Vancouver: U of British Columbia Press, 1973.
- Riddel, Joseph N. "Interpreting Stevens: An Essay on Poetry and Thinking." boundary 2 1.1 (1972): 79-97.
- . Purloined Letters: Originality and Repetition in American Literature. Ed. Mark Bauerlein. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1995.
- . The Clairvoyant Eye: The Poetry and Poetics of Wallace Stevens. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1965.
- Riffaterre, Michael. Semiotics of Poetry. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1978.
- Rigby, Catherine E. "Earth, World, Text: On the (Im)possibility of Ecopoiesis." New Literary History 35.3 (2004): 427-63.
- . "The Song of the Earth." Rev. of The Song of the Earth, by Jonathan Bate. Modern Language Quarterly 63.3 (2002): 391-96.
- . Topographies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism. Charlottesville and London: U of Virginia P, 2004.
- . "Utopian Attunement: Atmospheric Ecopoetics." ASLE-UK Biennial Conference. University of Lincoln. 10 Sept. 2006.
- . "What are Poets For? Heidegger's Gift to Ecocriticism." Centre for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies Research Seminar. Monash University. 30 May, 2001. Monash CCLCS 1 Oct. 2007.
- <<http://arts.monash.edu.au/cclcs/research/papers/heidegger.pdf>>
- .
- Rilke, Rainer Maria. Duino Elegies. Trans Stephen Cohn. Manchester: Carcanet, 1989.
- , The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke. Ed. and Trans.

- Stephen Mitchell. London: Picador, 1987.
- Robinson, Jeffrey C. "Romantic Poetry: The Possibilities for Improvisation." The Wordsworth Circle 37.3 (2007): 94-99.
- Robinson, Peter. "Painters of the Forth Bridge" Rev. of The Light Trap, by John Burnside, Madame Fifi's Farewell and Other Poems, by Gerry Cambridge, On the Tip of my Tongue, by Robert Crawford, and The Big Bumper Book of Troy, by W. N. Herbert. Times Literary Supplement 13 June, 2003. 11-12.
- Rogers, Nicholas. Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.
- Rorty, Richard. "Religious Faith, Intellectual Responsibility, and Romance." Cambridge Companion to William James. Ed. Ruth Anna Putnam. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1007. 84-102.
- . "Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and the Reification of Language." The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger. Ed. Charles B. Guignon. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993. 337-57.
- Rotella, Guy. Reading and Writing Nature: The Poetry of Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1991.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. The Reveries of the Solitary Walker. Trans. Charles E. Butterworth. New York: New York UP, 1979.
- Rumens, Carol. "Mysterious Nature." Rev. of Woods Etc, by Alice Oswald. Guardian 24 Sep. 2005. 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1576237,00.html>>.
- Sadoff, Ira. "Trafficking in the Radiant: The Spiritualization of American Poetry." American Poetry Review 34.4 (2005): 11-14.
- Salvasen, Christopher. The Landscape of Memory: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetry. London: Edward Arnold, 1965.
- Sampson, Fiona. "Editorial." Poetry Review 98.1 (2008): 116-117.
- Santayana, George. Dominations and Powers: Reflections on Liberty, Society and Government. London: Constable, 1951.

- . The Realm of Matter: Book Second to Realms of Being. London: Constable, 1950.
- . The Works of George Santayana: Volume III: Interpretations of Poetry and Religion. Ed. William G. Holzberger and Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr. Camb, Mass: MIT Press, 1989.
- . Life of Reason: Reason in Art. Vol. 4. New York: Constable, 1982.
- Santer, Eric L. On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2006.
- Schaum, Melita. "'Preferring Text to Gloss': From Decreation to Deconstruction in Wallace Stevens Criticism." Wallace Stevens Journal 10.2 (1986): 84-99.
- Schmidt, Dennis J. "Between Hegel and Heidegger." Man and World 15 (1982): 17-31.
- Scott, Kirsty. "In the Nature of Things." Guardian. June 18, 2005. 1 Oct., 2007  
<<http://books.guardian.co.uk/poetry/features/0,12887,1508838,00.html>>.
- Scigaj, Leonard. Sustainable Poetry: Four Ecopoets. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1999.
- Scruton, Roger. A Short History of Modern Philosophy: From Descartes to Wittgenstein. 2nd ed., [rev.] London: Routledge, 1985.
- Shapiro, Gary. "Hegel on the Meanings of Poetry." Art and Logic in Hegel's Philosophy. Ed. W. Steinkraus and K. Schmitz. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press; Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980. 35-66.
- Sharrock, Roger. Rev. of Home at Grasmere: Part First, Book First, of 'The Recluse' by William Wordsworth. Ed. Beth Darlington. The Modern Language Review 76.1 (1981): 167-168.
- Shepard, Paul. Thinking Animals: Animals and the Development of Human Intelligence. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1978.

- . Nature and Madness. San Francisco: Sierra Book Club, 1982.
- . The Others: How Animals Made Us Human. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1996.
- , and Daniel McKinley, eds. A Subversive Science: Essays Toward an Ecology of Man. Berkley: U of California P, 1969.
- Simic, Charles. "The Spirit of Play." New York Review of Books 52.17 (2005): 28-30.
- Simon, Myron. "The Georgian Poetic." The Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association 2.1 (1969): 121-135.
- Slovic, Scott. "Nature Writing and Environmental Psychology: The Interiority of Outdoor Experience." The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology. Ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. London: U of Georgia P, 1996. 351-370.
- Sokolowski, Robert. Introduction to Phenomenology. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.
- Soper, Kate. "The Idea of Nature." The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism. Ed. Laurence Coupe. London: Routledge, 2000. 123-26.
- Sostaric, Sanja. Coleridge and Emerson: A Complex Affinity. Dissertation.com, 2003.
- Spanos, William V. "The Question of Philosophy and Poiesis in the Posthistorical Age: Thinking/Imagining the Shadow of Metaphysics." boundary 2 27.1 (2000): 151-174.
- Spretnak, Charlene. States of Grace: Recovery of Meaning in the Post-Modern Age. San Francisco: Harper, 1991.
- Sprigge, T. L. S. "James, Aboutness, and his British Critics." The Cambridge Companion to William James. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. 125-44.
- Stanlis, Peter J. "In the Clearing: Continuity and Unity in Frost's Dualism," Humanitas, 18.1 (2005): 86-114.
- Stevens, Wallace. Collected Poems. London: Faber and Faber, 1955.



- . Collected Poetry and Prose. New York: Library of America, 1997.
  - . Letters of Wallace Stevens. Ed Holly Stevens. London: Faber and Faber, 1967.
  - . Opus Posthumous. Ed. Samuel French Morse. London: Faber and Faber, 1957.
  - . Selected Poems. Ed. John Burnside. London: Faber and Faber, 2008.
  - . The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagination. London: Faber and Faber, 1951.
- Sturma, Dieter. "Politics and the New Mythology: the Turn to Late Romanticism." The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism. Ed. Karl Ameriks. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 219-38.
- Taylor, Andrew. Poverty and Belief In The Poetry of Wallace Stevens. Diss., U of Melbourne, 1970.
- Taylor, Charles. "Heidegger, Language, and Ecology." Heidegger: A Critical Reader Ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Harrison Hall. London: Blackwell, 1992. 247-69.
- "The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (2000)." International Union for Conservation and Natural Resources (IUCN). 1 Oct. 2007 <<http://www.iucnredlist.org/info/tables/table1>>.
- Thomas, Edward. A Language Not To Be Betrayed: Selected Prose of Edward Thomas. Ed. Edna Longley. Manchester: Carcanet, 1981.
- Thomas, M. Wynn. "Full Fathom Five." Rev. of Sea Change by Jorie Graham. 3 May 2008. 6 May 2008. <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/reviews/poetry/0,,2277691,00.html>>.
- Tuan, Yi Fu. Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience. London; Minneapolis: Edward Arnold; U of Minnesota P, 1977.
- Vendler, Helen. On Extended Wings: Wallace Stevens' Longer Poems. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1969.
- . "Wallace Stevens: Hypotheses and Contradictions." British

Academy Warton Lecture in English Poetry. The British Academy,  
London. 17 May 2000.

<[http://www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/review/\\_pdfs/03/13-vendler.pdf](http://www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/review/_pdfs/03/13-vendler.pdf)>.

Vogel, Stanley M. German Literary Influences on American Transcendentalists. New Haven: Yale UP, 1955.

Voros, Gyorgi. Notations of the Wild: Ecology in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens. Iowa: City U of Iowa P, 1997.

Wasserman, Earl. "The English Romantics, The Grounds of Knowledge." Essays in Romanticism 4 (1964): 17-34.

Weil, Simone. Gravity and Grace. Trans. Emma Craufurd. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952.

Welleck, René. Confrontations: Studies in the Intellectual and Literary Relations between Germany, England and the United States during the Nineteenth Century. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1965.

---. "Emerson and German Philosophy". New England Quarterly. 16.1 (1943): 41-62.

---. "The Minor Transcendentalists and German Philosophy." New England Quarterly 15.4 (1942): 652-680.

Wheeler, Wendy, and Hugh Dunkerley. "Introduction." New Formations 64 (2008): 7-14.

White, Christopher. "Twenty-one Collections for the Twenty-first Century." The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Fiction. Ed. Berthold Schoene. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007. 78-88.

White Hadas, Pamela. Marianne Moore: Poet of Affection. New York: Syracuse UP, 1977.

Whitman, Walt. "Preface to 1855 Edition of 'Leaves of Grass'." Ed. Emory Holloway. New York: Doubleday, 1954.

---. Song of Myself. Petrarch Press, 1992.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee. Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected

- Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf. Ed. John B. Carroll.  
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1956.
- Williams, William Carlos. Collected Poems II: 1939-1962. Ed.  
Christopher MacGowan. Manchester: Carcanet, 2000.
- . Imaginations: Five Experimental Prose Pieces. Ed. Webster  
Schott. London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1970.
- . Pictures from Brueghal, and Other Poems: Including The Desert  
Music and Journey to Love. London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1973.
- . The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams. New York: New  
Directions, 1967.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. Philosophical Investigations. 3rd ed. Trans.  
G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.
- , Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Wolf, Maryanne. Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the  
Reading Brain. London: Icon, 2008.
- Wood, Allen W. "Kant's Practical Philosophy." Cambridge Companion  
to German Idealism. Ed. Karl Ameriks. Cambridge: Cambridge  
UP, 2000. 57-75.
- Wordsworth, William. Home At Grasmere. Ed. Beth Darlington. New  
York: Cornell UP, 1977.
- . Poetical Works. Ed. Thomas Hutchinson. Rev. ed. Ernest de  
Selincourt. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1969.
- . The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850. Ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M.H.  
Abrams and Stephen Gill. New York: W.W. Norton and Company,  
1979.
- . The Prose Works of William Wordsworth. Ed. W.J.B. Owen and Jane  
Smyser. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.
- Wormald, Mark. "An Edge of Doubt." Rev. of The Hoop, by John  
Burnside. Times Literary Supplement 17 Feb. 1989. 169.
- Young, J. Michael. "Functions of Thought and the Synthesis of  
Intuitions" The Cambridge Companion to Kant. Ed Paul Guyer.

Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. 101-22.

Zimmerman, Michael E. Contesting Earth's Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity. Berkeley, Calif.: U of California P, 1994.

---. Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics and Art. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990.

Zöllner, Günter. "German Realism: the Self-Limitation of Idealist Thinking in Fichte, Schelling and Schopenhauer." The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism. Ed. Karl Ameriks. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 200-18.